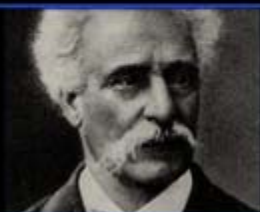


P · A · U · L

LAFARGUE

AND



THE

FLOWERING OF

FRENCH

SOCIALISM

♦ 1882-1911 ♦

LESLIE DERFLER

Paul Lafargue and the Flowering  
of French Socialism, 1882–1911



Paul Lafargue  
*and the* Flowering  
of French Socialism  
1882–1911

Leslie Derfler

Harvard University Press  
Cambridge, Massachusetts  
London, England  
1998

Copyright © 1998 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College  
All rights reserved  
Printed in the United States of America

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Derfler, Leslie.

Paul Lafargue and the flowering of French socialism, 1882-1911 /  
Leslie Derfler.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-674-65912-0

1. Lafargue, Paul, 1842-1911. 2. Socialists—France—Biography.  
3. Political activists—France. 4. Socialism—France—History.

I. Title.

HX264.7.L34D46 1998

335'.0092—dc21

[B] 97-42404

For Elliot and Helene



# Contents

List of Illustrations ix

Preface xi

Introduction i

i	Faults Enough and to Spare	4
2	Defending the Faith	17
3	Beyond All Possible Bounds	30
4	The Parisians Have Gone Mad	48
5	That Damned Congress	69
6	Fusillade at Fourmies	87
7	A Dangerous Dream	103
8	Peasants and Patriots	124
9	Beaten But Not Stoned	139
10	Let Us Storm the Forts	153
11	The Myth That Seems Absurd	169
12	Pleasantries or Naïvetés	182
13	Absurd and Incredible Conduct	196
14	Party of Opposition	216
15	Socialism and the Intellectuals	230
16	A Force Retarding Human Progress	245



17	The Unperceived Force	259
18	One Reform on Top of Another	270
19	Simply . . . Logical	288
	Afterword	301
	Notes	311
	Index	365

# Illustrations

(following page 16)

Karl Marx in 1882, the year before his death (from L. F. Ilyichov and others, *Frederick Engels, A Biography*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974).

Paul Lafargue's sister-in-law, Jenny, and her husband, Charles Longuet (Karl Marx Haus, Trier).

Eleanor Marx-Aveling, Karl Marx's youngest daughter (from Heinrich Gemkow and others, *Frederick Engels, A Biography*. Berlin: Dietz-Verlag, 1970).

Edward Aveling, Eleanor Marx's common-law husband, who drove her to suicide (from Heinrich Gemkow and others, *Frederick Engels, A Biography*. Berlin: Dietz-Verlag, 1970).

Jules Guesde, Paul Lafargue's longtime associate and sometime adversary (from L. F. Ilyichov and others, *Frederick Engels, A Biography*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974).

Friedrich Engels, the great benefactor and revered friend of the Lafargues, in 1890 (from *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels*. Foreign Languages Publishing House, n.d.).

Karl Kautsky, whose newspaper first published many of Lafargue's articles (from Heinrich Gemkow and others, *Frederick Engels, A Biography*. Berlin: Dietz-Verlag, 1970).

Eduard Bernstein, whose attempts to revise Marxist thought outraged the Lafargues (from Heinrich Gemkow and others, *Frederick Engels, A Biography*. Berlin: Dietz-Verlag, 1970).

Jean Jaurès, for Lafargue, "that devil of a man" (from Louis Lévy, *Vieilles Histoires socialistes*. Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1933).

Paul Lafargue, in advanced years (from L. F. Ilyichov and others, *Frederick Engels, A Biography*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974).



## Preface

Several years ago I published a book on “the socialist years” of Alexandre Millerand. Millerand was a prominent and controversial figure in French—and European—socialism before he went on to become minister of war, prime minister, and ultraconservative president of the republic. As a socialist, he defended the “reformist” viewpoint, which argues that circumstances may so alter as to make revolution unnecessary and works for change within existing democratic frameworks. His participation in a nonsocialist government (1899–1902) lay bare the conflict between orthodox, or revolutionary, Marxism and growing social democracy.

Millerand’s most outspoken opponent was Paul Lafargue. The disciple and son-in-law of Karl Marx, Lafargue, together with Jules Guesde, founded the first French Marxist party, the Workers Party (Parti Ouvrier Français, or POF) in 1882. He served as the chief theoretician and propagandist for Marxism in France during the three decades that followed, and he was the first Marxist to sit in the French legislature. His opposition to “Millerandism” was relentless, and aware of his fascinating origins and close ties to Marx and Engels, I eventually turned to his life story. I published the results of my investigation in a book that carried the account to the creation of the Parti Ouvrier and was titled *Paul Lafargue and the Founding of French Marxism*.

The present volume—and I’m grateful to the reviewers of the first who requested it—can be read independently. It begins at this point and ends with the dramatic deaths of Paul Lafargue and his wife in 1911. It is a biography and not a history of French socialism or of the French socialist party. Nevertheless, reading about Lafargue can tell us much about both. During these years, French socialism—and the Marxist party within it—“flowered” and became a significant political force. Whereas the earlier book placed emphasis on family identity, the present volume explores Lafargue’s political strategies, spe-

cifically his break with Guesde in the Boulanger and Dreyfus episodes and over the question of socialist-syndicalist relations. A good deal of light is shed on the history of the unified party in the period between its emergence in 1905 and the outbreak of war in 1914, a period often glossed over in the history of French socialism. I have also tried to describe Lafargue's pioneering efforts to apply Marxist methods of analysis to questions of anthropology, esthetics, and literary criticism. He was perhaps the first exponent of "cultural politics" and sought to confront the indirect forms of political dominance—over the schools, the media, and the family—and overturn a social order in which power was not only centralized and coercive but diffused and consensual. Consequently, Lafargue is important both as political activist and theorist.

Emphasis, too, is put on the Marxists within the larger socialist and labor movements, particularly on their political and ideological contribution to the maintenance of a Marxist presence within these movements. I will describe and assess the Marxist formulation, and the importance of Lafargue's part in that formulation, of such strategies as the promotion of a Second Workingmen's International Association (1889); the pursuit of reform within the framework of the existent state but opposition to any socialist participation in nonsocialist governments (1893–1899); and the subordination of trade unionism (syndicalism) to political action (1892–1914), which led to the alienation of organized labor from the socialist party. Consequently, because it provides the context within which Lafargue worked, there is much here about "the flowering of French socialism." Even so, I have tried to stick closely to Lafargue and to the issues with which he was most concerned, to his successes, and to his failures: for example, his inability to perform effectively in the Chamber of Deputies, his ultimate recognition of the legitimate claim by labor to play an independent role, and his support for the newly unified socialist party while attempting to keep it on a revolutionary course.

An impassioned, violent polemicist, Lafargue worked to influence the development of the Workers Party: until about 1889, a modest messianic sect, reaching its apogee in the 1890s, when its ideology and revolutionary vocabulary softened and its internationalism gave way to parliamentarianism and patriotism, only to return in the first decade of the new century to a militant posture and to embrace a reductionist simplistic schema. In Lafargue's politics, therefore, we are able

to trace the options open to the Parti Ouvrier as well as its development during a critical period of transition.

Despite the crucial part they played in the social and political changes of the past century, the first French Marxists are not widely known and even less widely appreciated, particularly in the English-speaking world.<sup>1</sup> This is especially true of their theoretical accomplishments. There are few adequate biographies, perhaps because many French historians long regarded this form of analysis as less than essential. They instead limited themselves to anthologies and popularizations of important party chiefs. Indeed, numerous writers, including those on the left, above all the disciples and admirers of Georges Sorel, have caricatured these early Marxists and particularly Lafargue: they have seen them as bringing to France not Marxism but merely distortions of it, and have regarded only the work of Labriola, Sorel, and Croce as able to repair the damage.<sup>2</sup> The Marxists never won the allegiance of more than a minority of French workers, largely because Marxist party chiefs preferred political to economic combat. Because there were so few theorists (most socialist party leaders could not read German, and hence most of Marx's writings, not yet translated, remained unknown to them), left-wing historians explain the failings of the first converts in terms of their theoretical ignorance. These historians lay stress on their incompetence in applying Marxist methods to the study of specific realities, and account for their inability to use dialectical reasoning and statistical analysis by pointing to their larger failure to have properly assimilated Marxist thought. While claiming scientific accuracy, late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Marxists instead produced the dogma that nourished revisions and allowed questions to be posed in contradictory terms, such as "revolution and reform," and "patriotism and internationalism." With regard to the challenges they faced—reformism, revolutionary syndicalism, and the threat of war—their inadequate grasp of Marxist methodology and consequent intractability accounted for their impotence in meeting these challenges successfully.<sup>3</sup>

Other, more politically moderate writers, displaying a reformist standpoint, have also condemned the legacy left by the early Marxists. While party leader Jean Jaurès held sufficient prestige to prevent the total disappearance of reformist alternatives following the unification of the diverse socialist groups in 1905, after World War I what might be called Marxist leadership prevailed. Recourse to nineteenth-cen-

tury revolutionary intransigence, both in tactics and in doctrine, produced a sterile and rigid socialism, unable to accommodate such twentieth-century experiences as the Russian Revolution, fascism, the Depression, and the New Deal. Socialists, and even the handful of communists, who sought accommodation with a changing capitalism by having their parties shift tactics and adjust doctrine, received little encouragement.<sup>4</sup>

Was this, then, the legacy of the first Marxists? That a legacy was left is undeniable. Their party never became the political avant-garde of the French workers' movement. Still, they succeeded in putting French labor on a new track. Long after their disappearance as an independent force in the French workers' movement, the Marxists left a heritage claimed by both socialists and communists. It is impossible, moreover, to dissociate their much maligned theorists from the context of Marxist ideological penetration. The audacity of these theorists, Lafargue above all, stamped them as continuously and creatively attempting to apply Marxist analysis to hitherto untouched areas. Moreover, their part in giving organized political expression to Marxism would appear more important than that credited in the standard histories of the French socialist movement, and their political strategies would seem more consistent than is admitted by their critics.

I want to express my gratitude to many of the same generous people who helped make the earlier volume a reality: to Olga Meier, who sent me copies of Marx family letters not included in her compilation, *Les filles de Karl Marx*, and to Michelle Perrot for suggesting that I ask for them; to Yvonne Kapp, the biographer of Eleanor Marx, for sharing some insights; to Mme S. Benoist-Guesde, the granddaughter of Lafargue's longtime associate; to Mme F. Winoek of the Centre d'Histoire des Mouvements Sociaux et du Syndicalistes; to Mme Denise Fauvel-Rouif, who directed the Institut Français d'Histoire Sociale; to Götz Langkau and the staff of the Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis in Amsterdam; and to the staffs of the Institut Socialiste d'Etudes et de Recherches and the Office Universitaires de Recherche Socialiste.

I am grateful to the staff of the Bibliothèque Marxiste de Paris (formerly the Institut Maurice Thorez), especially Dominique Candille; to that of the Archives de la Préfecture de Police, especially M. Coutarel; to that of the Archives Nationales and the Bibliothèque Nationale; and to Elio Selino of the Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli in Milan, D. Antonyuk of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism in

Moscow, the unnamed librarian of the Biblioteca Nacional José Martí in Havana, and David Heron and (later) Ronald Bulatoff and Elena Danielson of the Hoover Institution. For making me feel that Florida Atlantic University's library could cover almost any inadequacy, very special thanks to Dahrl Moore and then Nancy Wyman, who ran its interlibrary loan department. My appreciation also goes to my colleagues in and outside of Florida: Jan Hokenson, Joy Hall, Ben Lowe, Marilyn Boxer, the late Louis Greenberg, Arthur Mitzman, Sandra Norton, Patrick Hutton, Stephen Vincent, and—for their encouragement—Leo Loubère and John Cairns. Financing several short visits to foreign libraries and archives were the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Philosophical Society, and Florida Atlantic University's Division of Sponsored Research. I am grateful for the support shown by Joel Colton and Oscar Arnal. George Esenwein made some bibliographical references available. Irwin Wall commented on a paper read to the Society for French Historical Studies, which became a draft chapter. These four and the anonymous readers of the completed draft deserve my very real gratitude for their comments. It need hardly be said that the mistakes and misinterpretations that remain are mine and not theirs. I am pleased to acknowledge the permission granted by *Nineteenth Century French Studies* to reprint parts of my article "Paul Lafargue: The First Marxist Literary Critic" (17, nos. 3–4, spring–summer 1989, 369–384). Once more, very special recognition to William Cohn. Linda B. McLatchie did a superb job of copyediting. I am grateful to her and to Susannah Noel, who managed the project, as I am to Elizabeth Suttell and Aida Donald of Harvard University Press. My thanks to all these people.





Paul Lafargue and the Flowering  
of French Socialism, 1882–1911



## Introduction

Paul Lafargue was born in 1842 in Cuba of mixed racial descent. His father's mother was a mulatto, his mother's father a French-born Jew, and his mother's mother a Caribe Indian. He often boasted that "the blood of three oppressed races ran in [his] veins" and that he was an "internationalist of blood before [he] was one of ideology." As a medical student in Paris in the mid-1860s, where his studies had turned him to positivism, Proudhonism, and republicanism, he joined in demonstrations against the Second Empire and was subsequently forced into exile. He resumed his studies in London in 1866, became something of a fixture in the Marx household, and in 1868 married Marx's middle daughter, Laura. Although of course aware of Lafargue's racial origins, the Marxes showed no signs of real prejudice and saw his one-eighth black background as a source of amusement, not concern. The newlyweds moved to Paris, where they worked to expand the influence of the International Workingmen's Association (IWMA) and to turn it from its well-entrenched Proudhonism to Marxism. They fled the general repression that followed the fall of the Paris Commune, and after Paul's attempts to reestablish a branch of the International in Bordeaux and rouse the Bordelais against the Thiers government, the police began to work actively to apprehend them. Already sustained by Engels's generosity, they next went to Spain. There Lafargue sought, unsuccessfully, to instill Marxism against widespread anarchist opposition. Later, after a ten-year stay in London, the couple returned to France, where Paul worked to introduce Marx's thought and helped to found a new, wholly Marxist party, the Parti Ouvrier, in 1882. It developed from a schism in the short-lived Federated Socialist Workers Party, whose anti-Marxist majority, under the leadership of Paul Brousse, maintained a separate existence, following a legislative strategy based on demanding only those reforms *possible* of realization. The Marxists ridiculed this policy and dubbed its practitioners "*Possibilists*."

Lafargue's role as theoretician deserves emphasis. He introduced and applied Marxist thought, translating (here Laura Lafargue's role was predominant) and popularizing the *Communist Manifesto*, the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, sections of *Anti-Dühring* (which became *Socialism: Scientific and Utopian*), and other works. Lafargue formulated the first political strategy followed by the French Marxists, which in calling for ideological purity demanded total hostility to anarchists and reformists. He showed himself Marx's disciple in insisting on economic determinism, on the primacy of the concept of the class struggle, and on the theory of surplus value. More original contributions issued from his insistence on breaking the domination of bourgeois values, in much the same way that eighteenth-century *philosophes*, whom he admired and whose materialism he ceaselessly evoked, had eroded the intellectual and cultural foundations of the aristocracy. Here he anticipated the notion, later formulated by Antonio Gramsci, that a ruling class maintains its power by exercising an intellectual and cultural "hegemony." In his most famous pamphlet, *The Right to Be Lazy*, Lafargue showed the advantages that labor could derive by rejecting the bourgeois work ethic. And he made one of the first attempts, certainly the first in France, to apply methods of Marxist analysis to literature, especially to reveal elements of "social control" discovered through analyses of the bourgeois novel.

Lafargue insisted on the need to familiarize French workers with Marxist thought. It was a labor force that had not yet rejected Blanquism and still embraced Proudhonism, even utopian socialism, and was receptive to the radicalism then defended by Clemenceau. As late as 1885, Engels could write that even "the French edition of *Capital* remains a closed book to workers and not only to them but also to the best educated."<sup>1</sup> Twenty years later this was no longer true, and it may be said that much of the explanation lay in Lafargue's propaganda, which was furthered immensely by Laura Lafargue's translations of Marxist texts. Not since 1843 had the name of Marx appeared in a French publication (in a Fourierist journal) and not since his 1847 attack on Proudhon had one of Marx's writings appeared in France.<sup>2</sup> It was Lafargue who in 1866 brought Marx to the attention of French readers in his *Rive gauche* description of the new "scientific socialism." After this came a stream of articles in the second *Egalité*, pamphlets, brochures, and translations (and after he again took up residence in France, lectures). It was to further propaganda as well as to accustom labor to political action that Lafargue helped to create first a

collectivist, then a Marxist, party. The Parti Ouvrier—with the structure it soon adopted, a large national base, an annual national congress, an executive committee, a program, and an insistence on discipline—became the first modern political party in France. Lafargue's aim was to make Marx accessible, and if his party reduced much of his father-in-law's thoughts to fundamental schema and almost completely ignored Marx's dialectical view of the world, so complex and foreign to the tradition of French thought, Lafargue nevertheless succeeded.

This pedagogical emphasis on the uniqueness of Marxist thought is the constant underlying Lafargue's activity, to which all else was subordinated. Tactics might shift, as they would after 1882. The party became centralized and disciplined—and consequently even more isolated. But Lafargue's strategy, even at the cost of appearing contradictory, lay in distinguishing Marxism from its competitors—first anarchism, then Broussism (Possibilism), later Jaurèssist, or “integral,” socialism.

Finally, the two Marxist leaders must be distinguished from each other. If Guesde gave his name to the movement, Lafargue was the greater theoretician, seeking to apply Marxist methods of analysis in areas previously untouched by such analysis. At least initially, Lafargue's was the superior position, given his theoretical inclinations and his long intimacy with Marx and Engels. Guesde acknowledged that he had not owed his socialist and atheist formation to Marx; it had rather issued from his reading of Hugo and Kant, his hostility to the Empire, and his exposure to the Paris Commune. That is, his collectivism issued from experience and personal thought, and as late as 1892 he preferred to cite as icons Lassalle, Saint-Simon, and Robert Owen. Lafargue, accompanied by Laura and guided by Engels and Marx himself, had a more privileged entry.

# 1    Faults Enough and to Spare

Once returned to France in 1882 after their “London exile,” the Lafargues’ need for money grew urgent. Requests for aid appeared in almost every letter Paul and Laura wrote to Engels, and their pleas became pathetic. In June Lafargue asked Laura to intercede with Engels because “our situation . . . can only be put to rights with his help.” On her arrival, Laura had to ask Engels for help in buying additional furniture for their new flat. By mid-November, when he was forced to go into hiding, Paul was begging for funds to buy underwear for his wife, though he could plead as well for money to buy wine.<sup>1</sup> Their worsened predicament issued from the loss of his job at the Union Nationale insurance company. When the firm merged with another in late August, he had feared that the clerical staff “would be sent packing,” and his fears proved justified. Notice that he would receive only one month’s severance pay instead of the three he had anticipated left him devastated. His dismissal, however, also resulted from his employer’s dissatisfaction with his performance. Apparently, Lafargue had been reproached for an “insufficiently formal style” in his business correspondence, although he had tried to make use of “all the set phrases.”<sup>2</sup>

His writing brought little income. Marx arranged for a St. Petersburg journal, *Slovo* (*The Word*), to publish some of his son-in-law’s material, and it brought Lafargue to the attention of a Russian public that at one point included Lenin. He submitted articles on how small landholdings in France related to Russian conditions, and on American wheat and meat production, but hopes for a steady income from this source were not realized.<sup>3</sup> Laura described her husband’s busy schedule to Engels: “In addition to the work done for ‘le parti’ with his pen, his tongue, and now and then, his fists, he works daily at the Bibliothèque Nationale, preparing articles for diverse reviews that invariably end by rejecting his contributions on political grounds or

by inserting them . . . without paying for them on ‘economical grounds.’”<sup>4</sup>

She could have easily complained about his relative unconcern with personal finances and his neglect of her. Lafargue’s optimism remained extravagant as always. Engels lamented that Lafargue “concealed much” and that “his reports are all rose colored, dawn colored, celestial blue and hopeful green . . .”<sup>5</sup> He was often away from home. In late September 1882, Laura and her father returned from Switzerland, where Marx’s search for better health was plagued by bad weather, to the cluttered and disordered fifth-floor apartment on the boulevard de Port-Royal. They found no sign of Paul nor any message from him. He was, of course, attending the Saint-Etienne and Roanne Congresses and giving speeches in Lyons, St. Chamond, Montluçon, and other cities. Writing to Engels, Laura said that she had much to tell him “about Paul and his aberrations,” by which she meant his tendency to leave town without leaving word of his whereabouts.<sup>6</sup>

Lafargue was often absent on party business for days on end. One Friday night in November 1884, he departed as usual for a party meeting. By 2:30 A.M. her husband had still not returned, and aware of anarchist threats of violence, Laura became alarmed. A few days before, at a meeting of unemployed workers, anarchist calls for the looting of bakeries had led to police violence and bludgeoning. Socialists, particularly the editorial staff of *Le Cri du peuple*, had insisted that these “anarchists” were in fact agents *provocateurs* sent by the Ferry government, a charge subsequently shown to be true, though vehemently denied at the time by anarchists who promised to seek vengeance. Paul returned before daybreak, but his excuses were unrelated to the real reason. From newspaper accounts, Laura learned that anarchists had indeed made an appearance and that fighting had broken out.<sup>7</sup> Her later irritation at her husband’s willingness to serve a prison term, rather than accept the money raised by contributors to pay his fine, must be seen in this context.

The “incendiary” speech delivered at Montluçon led to his arrest for “incitement to murder, pillage and arson.” After leaving Roanne, Lafargue, Guesde, and two other delegates—Pierre Chapoulié, a thirty-year-old shoemaker, and Gustave Bazin, an Internationalist who had fought in the Commune, who had preferred exile in Switzerland and Belgium to prison, and who was now on the *Egalité* staff—gave a series of lectures in the Allier Department.

The department lay about 275 kilometers directly south of Paris



and would become one of several comprising a “solid bastion of the left” throughout the Third Republic. Having first won its reputation as a “red department” because of its opposition to the July Monarchy, it would elect one of the first socialist deputies (in 1889) and, by 1914, after the department of the Haute-Vienne, would contain the highest percentage of far-left voters. Chiefly agricultural, it was dominated by large estates: Moulins, the departmental seat, was without industry. However, in the west, the new industrial centers of Commentry and Montlucon, mere villages in the Second Empire, were filling up with miners and metalworkers. Trade unions and newspapers sympathetic to labor began to emerge. The first socialist group had been formed in 1878, during an economic crisis. When the deputies representing the department in the national legislature failed to raise the necessary social questions, local socialists, particularly ironworker and union organizer Jean Dormoy of Montlucon, appealed to Paris socialists to again visit the area. (Guesde had spoken in the Allier in 1880, and Dormoy had kept in touch with him.)<sup>8</sup>

On November 15, 1883, after a judicial inquiry, Lafargue, Guesde, and Bazin each received a summons to appear on the twenty-first before the Montlucon examining magistrate to show why they should not be tried for subversive speeches. (A police official had cited Lafargue as saying it was necessary to pillage the Bank of France that the Commune had spared.) Should they fail to appear, warrants for their arrest would be issued. The three chose to ignore the summons.<sup>9</sup>

Consequently, Lafargue and Guesde dropped out of sight, at least to the extent of avoiding the *Egalité* office and no longer attending party meetings. Because the police—dismissed by Laura as “a damned stupid lot”—did not know his address and he was anxious to keep them in ignorance, Lafargue asked Engels to send money for him in care of a third party. Then, in early March and in the pages of *L'Egalité*, Lafargue stated he would obey the summons only if he received train fare to Montlucon and a large hall was put at his disposal.<sup>10</sup> The conservative press condemned this display of arrogance, and Engels thought Paul and his colleagues were asking to be arrested. In an open letter to the examining magistrate published in the November 18 issue of the newspaper, Lafargue defended his right to criticize society in a satirical way and compared himself to Swift. “To save you from unnecessary costs,” he wrote, “until the triumph of the Workers Party my friends and I do not want to have any particular conversation with any examining magistrate.” Marx and Engels dismissed the bravado

of the two Marxist leaders as “infantile.” To Engels’s comment that Guesdists had “more luck than brains,” Marx sorrowfully replied that he had “many times made known my annoyance over the foolishness of Lafargue and Guesde.”<sup>11</sup> Engels feared that the jailing of the two men would take the heart out of the one Marxist newspaper in France, and he regretted their absurd boasting and attempts to compete with anarchists as revolutionaries. He told Eduard Bernstein how Marx had rejected the so-called “Marxism” of his French disciples and what “a colossal blunder” they had made in opening themselves to prosecution by their “revolutionary grandiloquence.”<sup>12</sup>

Lafargue was arrested—without offering resistance—on Tuesday evening, December 12,<sup>13</sup> while he was returning from a delicatessen carrying a salad for the evening meal. A young bystander was asked to carry the news—and the salad—to Laura. She at once informed Engels, hiding her anxiety behind some good-humored cursing: “That ass of a commissaire, confound him! happens to choose a day for his work on which we were to have a very good dinner, and now I have had to cook it and shall have to eat it myself, which is no fun at all.” But she showed her frustration when she added, “This is an awful place and an awful kind of existence, for one never knows what is coming next. At present I have got five francs in my pocket and therefore look forward with interest to the speedy release of my illustrious lord and master.” Engels, of course, sent her money at once. He assured her, correctly, that Paul would be released pending his trial, and praised her husband’s recent articles and his “gallant fight with the powers that be.”<sup>14</sup>

Understandably, Laura felt isolated. Her children were dead, her mother had died the year before, and her sister and father, both ill, were to die in a few months: Jenny Longuet in January 1883, a month before her thirty-eighth birthday, and Marx in mid-March. It was small wonder that living in a foreign country, with husbands who showed more concern (certainly in terms of time spent) for politics than for their families, and perpetually short of money, Laura and Jenny railed against “*la belle France*” whenever they met. Laura especially had maintained a preference for some of life’s luxuries. On one occasion, she wanted to “compare notes” with Engels on the subject of some new wines she had recently tried, and she could describe with enthusiasm a “truffled fowl” she had shared with the Jaclards (the husband was a former Communard and Lafargue’s Blanquist colleague in medical school), who had invited the Lafargues to dinner.<sup>15</sup>

For almost a year, Jenny Longuet had suffered acute abdominal pain. On one of his last visits, Lafargue confirmed her condition as hopeless. Yet although required to spend four hours traveling to and from her sister's home, Laura could not see her way clear to passing the night there. Stoical, only when dying of cancer of the bladder did Jenny reveal the extent of her pain and the misery of her life at Argenteuil. Her last letters showed her husband as unsupportive; he was away when she needed him most, leaving her with three small children—four after the birth of her lastborn in September—and a meddling mother-in-law who tried to browbeat her. The youngest sister, Eleanor, was embittered, but others described Longuet as an affectionate, if unreliable, father. He was to lose touch with the rest of the family, and Paul eventually became legal guardian of the Longuet children, with Engels providing for them.<sup>16</sup> Karl Marx would survive his firstborn by only two months. In addition to bronchitis, he developed a lung tumor, the immediate cause of his death on March 14. Paul attended the funeral in Highgate Cemetery three days later, Laura then being too ill to travel, and it was while in London that together with Guesde he was condemned by default for their speeches in the Allier. Both men appealed the decision, and their trial was set for the following month.

Yet in his way Lafargue loved his wife and wanted her with him. When in mid-1882 Engels had advised her not to rejoin her husband in Paris until Paul's position in the insurance company "stabilized," the latter hoped she would not listen, and he waxed optimistically about his prospects—once the initial outlay of setting up a household could be met.<sup>17</sup> When later that summer Laura accompanied Marx to Switzerland, Paul had missed her terribly; for herself and, as he admitted, for her ability to keep things in order. A few years later she told Engels why, despite her husband's lack of consideration, she continued to put up with him: "If Paul were not the soul of honor in all things public and political, I should not now be here and living with him, for he has faults enough and to spare of his own."<sup>18</sup>

Lafargue saw his Montluçon trial as yet another opportunity to present party propaganda. "The spoken word," he believed, "is *par excellence* the special weapon of socialist propaganda," and he took pride in conservative criticism of Marxists as "commercial travellers of disorder . . . ploughing the fields all over France, preaching the new gospel to the multitude and challenging the defenders of the faith to meet them in discussion." Socialists, he said, must first visit towns

where individual ownership had already disappeared, then rural workshops where memories of the individual ownership enjoyed by their forefathers still ran strong, and finally the countryside, where the consolidation of land by big estate owners and mortgagers was turning the farmers into rural laborers.<sup>19</sup>

At Engels's urging, Lafargue went by way of Bordeaux to visit his eighty-year-old mother, who had fallen under the influence of Marie Joséphine Lamaison, a daughter of a relative of her husband who had lived in Santiago and who had looked after the Lafargues' property after the family left Cuba for France. Lamaison, now also in Bordeaux and something of a religious zealot, was entrusted by Madame Lafargue with thirty-thousand francs for an unnamed religious order. It was apparently only a first payment, and the prospect of a lost inheritance prompted Engels to pay Lafargue's additional travel expense to Bordeaux. "Only it will require considerable diplomacy on Paul's part not to spoil his own game," he warned Laura.<sup>20</sup>

Apparently the visit was successful. Madame Lafargue, Laura reported, was "pleased and flattered" by her son's visit, which was "most needful and most opportune," and he was back in her "good graces." Paul agreed: "I have regained her favor to such an extent she has forgotten the mother-in-law sentiments she had nourished towards Laura."<sup>21</sup>

When attending Marx's funeral in London in March, Paul had shown horror at the prospect of prison, and the police wondered whether he would return to France. Engels predicted a six-month sentence, and in reassuring Paul insisted that he use the time to learn German: "He rejoices in the prospect of the second volume of *Capital* being published," Engels told Laura, "but will he ever be able to read it?"<sup>22</sup>

The trial, at the Allier Department assize court, took place on April 25-26, 1883. On its eve, a public meeting was held at the town theater, turned over without charge to the defendants by the mayor, who was seeking reelection and working-class votes. Lafargue took the opportunity to lecture French farmers on the threat from American agricultural productivity, and he thought that his talk was well received.<sup>23</sup> At the trial, witnesses for the accused included Giard; a professor at the Science Faculty at Lille; a deputy from the Nord; and two deputies from the Seine, Talandier and Tony Revillon, the last named a Radical. They testified that while they might disagree with its tenets, Marxism constituted an economic science and that the defendants had

not incited criminal behavior. Lafargue's defense consisted of a lecture on how social disorder issued from the institution of private property and how its status consequently required change.

In some respects, the case was a parody of courtroom procedure. The police commissioner who had pressed charges—and who was later exposed as an agent provocateur—was a confirmed alcoholic and was institutionalized within a few months of the trial. He was nevertheless allowed to testify despite objections raised about his competence. Lafargue requested permission to cross-examine him “not as the accused,” but as “Dr. Lafargue, physician and scientist.” Based on peculiarities in the witness's behavior, Lafargue diagnosed mental imbalance, much to the consternation of the court.<sup>24</sup> (In years to come, Lafargue cited the trial when condemning “bourgeois justice.”) Chapoulié and Bazin were acquitted on all counts. Guesde, Lafargue, and Dormoy were acquitted of incitement to murder and pillage but found guilty of inciting civil unrest; they were sentenced to six-month prison terms and fined one hundred francs plus court costs. The trial had required three lengthy sessions, one at night, and Lafargue had enjoyed every minute. “On returning from the hearing at 10:30,” he told Engels, “we were escorted to the hotel by a large and very sympathetic crowd.”<sup>25</sup>

Engels's prediction of a six-month sentence thus proved accurate. According to Lafargue's estimate, the police there were chiefly interested in Jean Dormoy, a future mayor of Montluçon and “one of the most active and intelligent men in the Workers Party.” Nine years younger than Lafargue, as a radical republican he had been acclaimed by moderates but persecuted by them on his conversion to collectivism. His former employer made it impossible for him to find factory work, and he made a pitiful living peddling lighting oil. (Dormoy was to die from exhaustion and malnutrition at forty-seven.) Imprisoned, he would be ineligible to run in county council elections, three months distant. Guesde and Lafargue, the prosecutor admitted, were theoreticians who visited the area; men like Dormoy, a resident, were “far more dangerous.”<sup>26</sup>

Still, because the two men had been able to give a public talk in the town theater on the eve of the trial, propaganda was disseminated, and “the bourgeoisie in the audience,” according to Lafargue's account, “if not won over, saw that we were neither lunatics or imbeciles.” His explanation of the difficulties for French agriculture as created by American competition and his discussion of the industrial

crisis then affecting the economy had even evoked congratulations from the president of the local chamber of commerce.

A pattern was set for subsequent trials involving socialists. The prosecutor had described the Marxist defendants as the most dangerous type of criminals, because they wanted to seize private property. As additional proof, he cited the “immoral” articles of Gabriel Deville, an editor of *L’Egalité* and Parti Ouvrier leader, advocating “free love.” (Actually, Deville had criticized the adequacy of “free unions,” because they failed to address the question of property “which lay at the root of hypocrisy in marriage.”) Also cited was Lafargue’s satirical article, “Pope Pius IX in Paradise,” first published in *La Emancipación* in 1872 and reproduced in *L’Egalité* ten years later.<sup>27</sup> The attempt backfired when the prosecutor’s descriptions gave rise to laughter from the spectators. Lafargue’s and Guesde’s courtroom lectures on the necessity of furthering the transformation of property from individual to collective ownership drew applause, and the episode may have persuaded Lafargue that one way for a socialist to win election to public office was through prison.<sup>28</sup>

The entry of the two culprits into Sainte-Pélagie prison on May 21 (Dormoy joined them the following month) took place in a holiday-like atmosphere. They brought with them luggage, lamps, a folding screen, and other belongings, and then met with about twenty friends and associates who accompanied them to a nearby café. Toasts were exchanged, and a collection was undertaken on behalf of Guesde’s family.<sup>29</sup>

No longer standing, Sainte-Pélagie bordered the Jardin des Plantes, east of the Latin Quarter. It was built during the seventeenth century as a retreat for repentant prostitutes and “ladies of light conduct” whose husbands had secured *lettres de cachet*. During the Revolution, the ladies had gone, and Sainte-Pélagie became a prison, specifically a midway stop for Girondins on their way to the guillotine; its distinguished clientele included Madame du Barry, Madame Roland, and the Vicomte de Beauharnais. Used for political prisoners in the First Empire, it was enlarged during the July Monarchy to accommodate common criminals, although part of the building was reserved for critics of the regime. Succeeding political prisoners found conditions comfortable, compared to such places as Doullens and Belle-Ile. The relatively spacious rooms measured five meters each way. Food could be brought from neighboring restaurants; visitors were allowed; books and pamphlets could be received. Over the years, many young

radicals, as if experiencing a rite of passage, spent time there, although usually only a few months. Blanqui was imprisoned at Sainte-Pélagie on three occasions, and Proudhon had worked on three of his books while installed there from 1849 to 1852. Other inmates included such Blanquist disciples—and student friends of Lafargue—as Gustave Tridon and Germain Casse; Clemenceau's future associate, Camille Pelletan; and the future Dreyfusard senator, Auguste Scheurer-Kestner, who, as a young Alsatian chemist, was imprisoned for bringing in contraband brochures from Switzerland during the Second Empire (he later described Sainte-Pélagie as “a true paradise,” where all notable Parisians in opposition had the honor of being detained and where the “strongest friendships” were cemented).<sup>30</sup>

The warden, as Lafargue and Guesde learned on a preliminary visit, was “an old admirer of Guesde,” dating from the latter's newspaper days in Montpellier, who credited Guesde with giving him his “first political education.” Lafargue and Guesde had reserved the two best rooms available; only adequate furniture was lacking. They could receive guests from ten in the morning until four in the afternoon, and Laura, who planned to spend much of the summer in London, lunched every day with her husband prior to her departure. (Paul had asked Engels to pay the previous month's rent on the couple's flat, and in complying, Engels extended the invitation to Laura.)<sup>31</sup> “Nothing could be much less like a prison than this prison house of theirs,” she said, referring to the political wing of Sainte-Pélagie as the “Pavillion of Princes.” Every day, at about 10:30 A.M., Laura brought food, cooked or uncooked—if the latter, it was prepared in the prisoners' rooms; and because spirits were not allowed, she smuggled in “a jolly little bottle of brandy,” while party members contributed wine and tobacco.<sup>32</sup>

The additional costs of making the two prisoners comfortable had, of course, been covered by Engels. Benefiting from “fresh air baths,” in good health and in rare humor, Paul mailed Engels a copy of the request for game the three prisoners had sent one of their friends. If fresh game was not forthcoming, the friend would be denounced as a “reactionary, bourgeois, and POSSIBILIST.”<sup>33</sup> Laura complained they were eating too well, “taxing their digestive powers,” but was pleased that her mother-in-law had sent fruit and “one or two very affectionate letters to her son.” That summer's most disquieting note was that Laura had taken offense at not having been designated her father's literary executor together with Eleanor and Engels, an omission she

attributed to Marx's poor health. From her last conversations with her father, she had, she insisted, been charged with the disposition of his papers.<sup>34</sup> Also cause for concern was the future of the four motherless Longuet children. Still, these matters did not prevent Laura from going off to London.

While Dormoy spent much of his time reading Marxist texts, Paul was working hard. In addition to trying to learn German, which to his wife had "continued to sound astonishingly like French," he was preparing several lengthy articles, a revision of *The Right to Be Lazy*, an elaboration of and a commentary on the Parti Ouvrier Program, and a novel. One article, "Socialism and Darwinism," which eventually appeared in the December 1883 issue of the British monthly, *Progress*, was submitted in advance to Engels, who "read it with pleasure."<sup>35</sup>

Though Lafargue worked on the novel well into the following year, it was never published, and he placed blame for repeated delays on his friend Ernest Vaughan, the business manager of Henri Rochefort's *L'Intransigeant*, for failing to collaborate with him. Lafargue may have completed the novel himself. When he was once more put in Sainte-Pélagie in May 1885 to serve an additional (two-month) term for failure to pay the one-hundred-franc fine, he asked Vaughan to try to secure his release. If that proved impossible, Vaughan was to seek a publisher "to get the advance to pay the fine and free [him]."<sup>36</sup>

"We are not wasting our time in jail," Paul wrote the Italian socialist Pasquale Martignetti halfway through his term. *The Right to Be Lazy* had been revised (reflecting the year's exposure to French conditions after his return from England); the pamphlet on the party program had been completed with Guesde; and the two men were gathering material for a history of the French Revolution, which they hoped to complete in three or four years, "before the revolution arrives, when one must say farewell to such work and devote oneself to action." He submitted a prospectus to publishers; Charpentier showed interest but hesitated because the imprisoned authors demanded partial payment after the submission of each chapter.<sup>37</sup>

Ultimately, a four-page essay, intended as an introduction for a larger history, was published. Lafargue and Guesde defined the Revolution in terms of a class struggle won by the victorious bourgeoisie, and "class" was understood to mean individuals who shared similar economic and political interests. The Revolution was seen as a bourgeois offensive against both the "little people" from whom they had emerged and the aristocrats who blocked their advancement. These



bourgeois, aspiring to free commerce, industry, and finance, posed as champions of liberty, equating their own freedom with general freedom. They found it necessary to ally with the peasantry and working class, to “unleash” them in order to defeat reaction, and so embarked on a struggle that continued into the nineteenth century. In addition to this class analysis, Lafargue began to consider the cultural consequences of the Revolution, considerations that formed the bases of articles published several years later. On his part, Guesde produced two brochures, and Dormoy a work on the resolutions passed by various workers’ congresses.<sup>38</sup> But Lafargue’s and Guesde’s most important prison publication proved to be the commentary on the 1880 Program. Because their approach was typical of and doubtless drawn from the many lectures and addresses given, it is useful to survey the contents.<sup>39</sup>

A theoretical preamble defined collectivism as the secretion of existing capitalist society but warned that private property, which included personally used land and industry (that is, where real and not absentee ownership existed), would endure at least through the early stages of socialist society. The two authors then identified the crises they saw as inherent in capitalism and highlighted the growing concentration of industry, which, with the resulting expropriation of artisans’ tools by factory-based enterprises, revealed that collectivization was well underway in capitalist society.

The prerequisite for necessary socially based economic expropriation was political expropriation, and thanks to a swelling of proletarian ranks by dispossessed petit bourgeois elements, this too was becoming a reality. The “revolution” would not be hastened by individual acts of terror or delayed by bourgeois reform. No person or party could begin it, but a party conscious of the necessary economic transformation could take charge of it. This was the role of the Workers Party. The proletariat had lost control of the revolution in June 1848 and March 1871 because it lacked a program of its own and so allowed the government to fall into the hands of the bourgeoisie. The difficulty in winning a revolution lay not in seizing power but in retaining it; hence the need for a precise program. The party, acting as both instructor and recruiting sergeant, would use all means necessary to further the proletarian seizure of power: “spoken propaganda,” such as meetings and lectures; “written propaganda,” such as books, newspapers, and journals; and “activist propaganda,” such as strikes, petitions, and participation in electoral campaigns. However, the Parti

Ouvrier would run candidates not so much to win seats as to further the political education of the proletariat. The party was in every sense a “teaching party,” designed to make Marxism known to workers, who were then embracing such rival ideologies as reformism, anarchism, and radicalism.

This oversimplification of Marxist thought can be ascribed to Lafargue’s and Guesde’s ignorance of the basic texts. It also issued from the need to distinguish the party from its competitors for working-class support and from the poorly educated status of most workers. The Program discounted the usefulness of reforms. At most, industrial legislation would increase working-class leisure and limit child labor. Political change, such as constitutional revision or abolition of the Senate, would only “amuse the Radicals.” Tax reductions would only result in lower wages. Free secondary education, then advocated by the Ferry government, would not resolve social problems, because ignorance was the result, not the cause, of poverty and because secondary education would only replace faith in Christianity with faith in capitalism. Nationalization of public services was a delusion: it would mean losing the right to strike and so strengthen the capitalist state. Not partial but total socialization was the goal. Universal suffrage was a smoke screen: it deluded workers by providing illusions of equality and so weakened the necessary antagonism between capital and labor.

The article on Darwinism applauded by Engels constituted an early attack on what came to be called “Social Darwinism.” Lafargue wrote that however much it concealed scientific realities, Christianity had once provided solace. The religion had now become so “threadbare” that a substitute was deemed necessary to demonstrate that the inferiority of the masses was but a law of nature. Science was pressed into service, specifically the alleged derivation of Darwin’s theory about the survival of the fittest. Lafargue found it ironic that science and philosophy, once forces spurring revolution to free the oppressed, were now relied on by contemporary capitalists. Still, science was not to be turned from its true purpose and would continue to further the cause of human emancipation. The fittest did not always survive, at least not in capitalist society, which was marked by “the most vast application of scientific discoveries to industry and commerce [and] the most pitiful degradation and degeneration of mankind.” Capitalism thus permitted “the prizes of life” to be carried off by the most unfit: victory went not to the most energetic, but to those owning “machines and guns.”<sup>40</sup>

However, another of Lafargue's prison writings, a two-part study of American grain production that built on the lecture given at Montluccon, disappointed Engels. A statistic-filled article on farming in the American West published the following year nevertheless revealed that Lafargue, who had shown interest in the American economy in general and in states west of the Mississippi in particular, was one of the few Frenchmen who had read on the subject. In 1879 he had attempted a Marxist analysis of the Civil War, seeing African Americans as a new proletariat, now freed and having emigrated to the North, where their labor was welcomed. They had, in fact, exchanged one kind of servitude, slavery, for another, wage earning.<sup>41</sup>

In his draft article, Lafargue praised the "scientific" approach taken by American farmers, by which he meant their widespread use of labor-saving machinery and which he attributed to the "inventive genius of the Yankees." Even so, American agriculture was dominated by finance capitalism and hence subject to crises of overproduction. He then discussed the impact on western Europe of vast American grain shipments. In a prefatory comment, the conservative *Journal des économistes*, which published the article, boasted to its readers of its willingness to present all viewpoints, even those of its "enemies," although it found that Lafargue had not used his "remarkable investigative spirit and fine style in the service of political economy," that is, that his article lacked necessary methodological rigor and discipline, an opinion with which Engels agreed.<sup>42</sup> Lafargue would continue to show interest in America, and much of his material came from Marx's library. Later that winter Engels offered him the works in French that it contained, and Lafargue eagerly accepted. He also asked for the American agricultural reports that Marx had collected, "a history of Indians" he had recalled seeing, as well as the works of the Neapolitan philosopher Giambattista Vico and H. S. Maine's study of the origins of private property.<sup>43</sup> Then on October 21, a month earlier than called for in his sentence, Lafargue was released from Saint-Pélagie prison. Three days later he was delivering a speech to a working-class audience declaiming that "the bourgeoisie accumulated its capital by means of bloodshed and assassination."<sup>44</sup>

[To view this image, refer to  
the print version of this title.]

Karl Marx in 1882, the year before his death.

[To view this image, refer to  
the print version of this title.]

Paul Lafargue's sister-in-law, Jenny, and her husband, Charles  
Longuet.

[To view this image, refer to  
the print version of this title.]

Eleanor Marx-Aveling, Karl Marx's youngest daughter.

[To view this image, refer to  
the print version of this title.]

Edward Aveling, Eleanor's Marx's common-law  
husband, who drove her to suicide.

[To view this image, refer to  
the print version of this title.]

Jules Guesde, Paul Lafargue's longtime associate and  
sometime adversary



[To view this image, refer to  
the print version of this title.]

Friedrich Engels, the great benefactor and revered friend of the Lafargues, in  
1890.

[To view this image, refer to  
the print version of this title.]

Karl Kautsky, whose newspaper first published many of  
Lafargue's articles.

[To view this image, refer to  
the print version of this title.]

Eduard Bernstein, whose attempts to revise Marxist  
thought outraged the Lafargues.

[To view this image, refer to  
the print version of this title.]

Jean Jaurès, for Lafargue, “that devil of a man.”

[To view this image, refer to  
the print version of this title.]

Paul Lefargue, in advanced years.

## 2 Defending the Faith

After his release, Lafargue threw himself into party work, putting emphasis on organization and recruitment. Following the path set out in the commentary on the party program, he was determined to make propaganda and politics the essential means of action for Marxists. This was based on his—and Guesde’s—faith in the inevitability of proletarian revolution and their belief in the necessity of organizing workers into a distinct political party for the conquest of power. Accordingly, the Parti Ouvrier Français (POF) was to focus on indoctrination rather than activism but would avoid doctrinal “metaphysics.” Reality, not dogma, sanctioned socialism. Trade union activity was seen as secondary; disturbances, as accidents to avoid. Consequently, Lafargue spent more time than ever in libraries and editing rooms, and on speaking and recruitment tours.

To have his party possess a newspaper was his constant ambition, but one realized only sporadically between 1882 and 1889. In December 1882, *L’Egalité* again had to suspend publication, and Parti Ouvrier members found it necessary to write for other papers, such as *Le Citoyen* and Jules Roche’s *Le Cri du peuple*. But this was inconvenient; Marxists had to compete with journalists holding other viewpoints, and the result was perpetual intrigue and partisanship. On the other hand, party chiefs continued to harangue whatever audiences they could find, especially in the countryside at election time or before or after a party congress. Lafargue was less accomplished an orator than Guesde, who preferred speaking—in the Nord, the Allier, the Aube, and the Cher—to working at a desk.<sup>1</sup>

Included in the propaganda process was an abridgment of *Capital* undertaken by Deville and published in August 1883. On his visit to Paris the previous year, Marx had encouraged the twenty-eight-year-old Deville to produce a condensed version.<sup>2</sup> Dissatisfied with the completed manuscript, Engels asked the Lafargues to persuade Deville to make extensive revisions. Paul replied that Deville was under pres-

sure from his publisher to put it quickly into print and was in any case too worn out to comply, while Laura asked Engels not to make his criticisms public. Both Lafargues feared that given the anti-German sentiment of most French workers, such criticism would hurt the Marxist, and only benefit the bourgeois, press.<sup>3</sup>

An extensive social life also dissuaded Deville from undertaking extensive revision. Although “regular as a clock,” according to Paul’s description, he was “excitable and hotheaded, but hides his violence under an air of formal and systematic calm.” Since his student days, Lafargue went on, Deville had been “on terms of intimacy, always methodically, with all the women of the Latin Quarter, who thought highly of him . . . since he is a handsome lad. He renewed [mistresses] frequently, even having several at a time, who sometimes passed each other on the stairs . . . (He theorized that ‘in love, the beginning is best.’ He began often.)”<sup>4</sup>

Engels swallowed his misgivings—until he heard of a proposed German translation of Deville’s abridgment. That Marx and Engels always regarded the German movement more seriously than the French was never more clearly revealed. Engels objected strenuously. “I have held my tongue while it was published only in France . . . but if it comes to be put before the German public, that’s quite a different thing. I cannot allow, in Germany, Mohr to be perverted—and seriously perverted—in *his very words*.”<sup>5</sup>

In preparation for the party congress, scheduled for the following March in the northern industrial town of Roubaix, with its ninety thousand (chiefly) textile workers, Lafargue went, as he put it, as “a scout to see how the land lies.”<sup>6</sup> The choice of Roubaix confirmed Parti Ouvrier efforts to bring organized socialism to the north, a task believed eased by the existence of a disciplined industrial workforce in the region’s coal mines and textile mills, which made the Nord the most industrialized of France’s eighty-three departments. The three towns of Lille, Roubaix, and Tourcoing formed a triangle in French Flanders along the Belgian border. The area contained large-scale factories and a concentrated urban population. A network of employers tied by family alliances explained uncommonly fierce economic conflict and a correspondingly advanced class consciousness. Violence had broken out in 1872 when Thiers forcibly crushed a miners’ strike, and would recur repeatedly. The constant movement of people between Belgium and France also helped to shape the culture and politics of the area: until the Second Empire, most workers spoke the local

patois, and the Flemings of both countries were communitarian. There was not much need to preach class solidarity here.<sup>7</sup>

As Lafargue's train approached Lille, he saw "row upon row of red-brick factory chimneys [that] spewed black smoke into the low northern skies." Oldest of the three cities, Lille had become an industrial center in the nineteenth century. Its high birthrate, Belgian immigration, and the annexation of nearby towns during the Empire caused a surge in population from 55,000 near the beginning of the century to more than 200,000 in the mid-eighties. Yet old neighborhoods remained intact because the mills lay mainly on the outskirts. Nor was all industrial activity limited to textiles; thousands of Lillois worked in railway yards, sugar mills, machine works, and chemical plants.<sup>8</sup>

Conditions in Lille were worse than anywhere in the Nord. Employers made few provisions for workers, preferring to rely on the steady inflow of cheap labor. Because of the burgeoning population, water, sewers, lighting, and paved streets were all inadequate. Poorly nourished families lived in substandard working-class districts. Infant mortality was among the worst in France, and although the birthrate was high, in some districts only immigration accounted for population growth. The miners' villages consisted of drab groups of one-story houses located near the pits, devoid of parks and other amenities. Nord miners were paid less than their counterparts elsewhere in France and had higher illiteracy rates.<sup>9</sup>

The coming of the Republic had brought no improvement. Neither mutualist cooperation nor a large-scale textile strike in 1880 could slow the growing unemployment that came in the wake of trade difficulties experienced by the French cotton and wool industries. Then a twenty-eight-year-old mill worker, Gustave Jonquet, organized a new union of spinners. Fired from his job, he discovered *L'Egalité*, and together with another millhand from Lille, Gustave Delory, founded a socialist club named after the newspaper. On a visit, Guesde established ties with the two men. In 1881 a thirty-three-year-old organizer from Roubaix, Henri Carette, founded a socialist branch of the Workers Party in the Nord, which supported Guesde's candidacy. In October of that year, a regional congress gave birth to the *Fédération du Nord* for that department and the neighboring Pas-de-Calais. Together with Guesde, Carette fought a hostile majority to defend a Marxist program and centralized organization.<sup>10</sup> Two years later, Delory, a rotund Fleming and a natural politician and skilled organizer,



assumed a leadership role, and the Fédération narrowly voted to affiliate with the Parti Ouvrier.<sup>11</sup>

Together with Guesde, Lafargue spoke at Saint-Quentin and Lille but went on alone to Saint-Omer and Roubaix, his first arrival in “the Lancashire of France.” He had found Lille’s working-class districts, whether in the old city, outside the walls, or in nearby towns, “overcrowded, poor and miserable.” And visitors were left horrified by the squalor of “sordid” neighborhoods, “swarming with workers, who suffer, who sweat, and who end as nothing in the shadowed, narrow hovels.” Dozens of thousands of women and children worked in the three cities. The old multiroomed houses in the inner cities had been subdivided into as many rooms as possible, each occupied by a family. Life expectancy was short, and women in their twenties were old before their time.<sup>12</sup> This proved fertile ground for socialist organizers, and in each town Lafargue met with socialist—if not Marxist—groups. He found them “very well disposed and full of enthusiasm” and thought it “wonderful how Marx’s theories, incomplete, garbled, even perhaps falsified, hover in the air of these industrial centers.” The few “anarchists” found were dismissed as “hotheads or members of the police.”<sup>13</sup> The few theoretical articles published in the Nord socialist press, largely borrowed from Paris newspapers, stressed the messianic insistence on the proximity of revolution.

Back in Paris, Lafargue began offering lectures at the party’s socialist literary club (Cercle de la Bibliothèque Socialiste). The POF’s Paris organization, the Agglomération Parisienne, had established the club as a vehicle for monthly lectures on social economy, and he admitted that “we count heavily on the lectures for propaganda.”<sup>14</sup> Offered every Sunday, they were well attended. Lafargue gave the first on February 3, 1884, to 160 listeners, and another 50 had to be turned away. He spoke on “the effect of the economic environment on man and human society,” one in a series of three talks entitled “The Economic Materialism of Karl Marx.” Deville contributed a five-part series on “the evolution of capital.” Although police informers present found the talks “sometimes boring,” Lafargue believed the public was impressed. Oriol (who published Deville’s abridgment of *Capital*) was “so delighted by our success,” Lafargue happily told Engels, “that he is going to publish our lectures.”<sup>15</sup> Each, in fact, in the tradition of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, appeared as a separate brochure. In the months that followed, Lafargue spoke on parliamentary representation and universal suffrage, which, he argued, often reflected the

views of the moneyed interests who lobbied forcefully. He also offered a course in English. At another club (Cercle d'Etudes Socialistes), he spoke to about a hundred people on the differences between manual and intellectual workers; and he predicted that thanks to the widespread use of machinery future society would see such divisions disappear.<sup>16</sup> Both lectures and pamphlets corresponded to the party's aim of spreading Marxist propaganda.

Certainly collectivists had failed to make Marx's original works available to workers. The only texts in French were the first volume of *Capital*, unreadable for most workers and poorly understood even by most Parti Ouvrier members, and the Lafargues' shortening of Engels's *Anti-Dühring* into *Socialism: Scientific and Utopian*. Not until 1885 did Laura's translation of the *Communist Manifesto* (in *L'Egalité* from August 23 to November 7) appear; and two years after that, *The Civil War in France*, which the new party organ, *Le Socialiste*, began to publish.<sup>17</sup> Theory, however, was difficult to absorb in serialized form. The difficulty of obtaining translators and editors explains the paucity of translations, as do the French Marxists' underestimation of the original works of Marx and Engels and their inability to read German. Vaillant and Jaurès knew Marx's writings better than the Guesdists did, but as the historian of the party suggests, works of vulgarization better served the French public at that time.<sup>18</sup>

Lafargue sent printed copies of his lectures on Marx's economic materialism to Engels. They addressed themes that he would develop in articles, brochures, and books, particularly his regret that scholars and critics alike had dismissed out of hand Marx's conclusion that "as a rule the mode of production of the physical means of life dominates the development of social, political, and intellectual life." He wished these critics would view economic "determinism" as a means of experimentation, as "a new tool" and an instrument of research, "rather than [as] a body of doctrine with axioms, theorems, and corollaries." Using examples drawn from his reading of the philosophy of history, Lafargue maintained that such abstractions as justice, liberty, and fatherland derived from economic origins; he denied any independent existence for them or the possibility that they preceded rather than reflected experience.<sup>19</sup>

"Rather than engendering the events of history," he stated, "[they] are the consequences of the social phenomena which in evolving, create them, transform them, and suppress them." Like the notion of progress, they issued from a bourgeois mindset that served that class's

political and economic interests. He cited Vico and the American anthropologist Lewis Morgan as providing philosophical and anthropological support by identifying historic uniformities in different societies at similar stages of development. Even the idea of the soul possessed a natural history; it was one of the first "intellectual inventions" and naturally led to the idea of there being a dwelling place for it, either under the earth or in the sky, to prevent it from wandering and interfering with the living. And from this, there evolved the idea of God. Because it was man who created and changed the social environment, "the motors of history" resided in him and not in "justice," "progress," "liberty," or any other "metaphysical entity." Such "confused and inexact ideas" as "justice" varied according to the historical epoch, and according to the group and even the individual within an epoch, for they were "the mental reflections of the phenomena produced in the different parts of the . . . environment."

Hence Lafargue grafted Marxist materialism onto eighteenth century-materialism. If it produced oversimplification, the attempt was audacious; he would show a willingness to apply (his perception of) Marxist method to new areas: literary criticism, anthropology, and linguistics, tracks on which no Marxist had yet set foot. And because economic circumstances were susceptible to change, working people could control their own fate. "Man will only cease to be their plaything when he can take control of them and make them serve human needs." Thus the concept of economic materialism carried the message of revolt against capitalism, as capitalism itself had broken economic molds that had proven too restrictive.

Reading Lafargue's lectures, Engels wished he had used new illustrations and shown more attention to certain theoretical points. As with Lafargue's introduction of a new French edition of *The Poverty of Philosophy* (which, however, would not be published until 1896), Engels corrected a number of errors and urged Paul "to try to be more faithful to the original. Marx is not a man whom one can afford to treat lightly," and he hoped Laura would insist on a faithful equivalent.<sup>20</sup> Half apologetically, Engels admitted that "if I am strict with him, it's because I see it does him good and he improves considerable [*sic*] by hammering a bit now and then." In short, Engels regarded Lafargue's and Deville's public lectures and their published versions as "less difficult" works, suitable for workers just beginning to learn Marxism.<sup>21</sup>

Lafargue also signed a contract to publish a book on grain produc-

tion in America and planned to submit additional articles for the German Social Democratic Party newspaper edited by Karl Kautsky, *Die Neue Zeit*.<sup>22</sup> A harshly satirical work, “The Sale of an Appetite” (“Un Appétit vendu”), which appeared in *Die Neue Zeit* in 1884, exemplified Lafargue’s efforts to render Marxist themes—here the labor theory of value—understandable to workers. Lafargue pretended that an attendant at the Charenton asylum had given him a manuscript, according to which the writer, an inmate, was not insane but held captive. Lafargue would tell his story and leave it for the reader to judge.<sup>23</sup>

A starving man, peering into the window of a restaurant, is given a sumptuous meal by an unknown wealthy benefactor who admires his appetite. The benefactor, identified as a great capitalist, had lost his own. He wants to buy the other’s, just as he is capable of buying his labor—or anything else, aside from the ability to bear children and digest food. (Lafargue here speculated about the possibility of a bourgeois woman, reluctant to “deform her figure, . . . deposit[ing] her fertilized ovum in the womb of a poor working woman,” that is, requiring her to sell her womb as she does her labor.)

The poor man agrees to sell his appetite for two thousand francs a month, and the contract is duly notarized. Subsequently, he experiences the descent into his stomach of the food and drink he neither ate nor imbibed but was obliged to digest. His stomach fills and he feels sluggish, but he rationalizes his act by comparing it to the sale by others of their labor. The master experiences the pleasure of eating, but it was the poor man who suffers, “spread[ing] filth and bad odors through the house.” Able to survive only by taking frequent enemas, he tries to break the contract and bring an end to his suffering, but is told by the notary that he is in the same position as all who work for another’s wages, whether mechanic, prostitute, or clerk; only it is his organs and not his labor that he has put at his employer’s disposal. He tries, unsuccessfully, to kill himself, and then murders his master. On hearing his explanation, the court places him in an asylum. The essay was quintessential Lafargue: a work of great irony, tinged with vulgarity and suffused with bitterness.

The trip to the north, the impact of Engels’s *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, the prospect of the French republication of Marx’s attack on Proudhon, the popularity of Deville’s abridgment of *Capital* (which was stimulating sales of the original), his own publications (the latest an article on “Peasant Property in France” in the English periodical

Today), and the publication of his lectures—all encouraged Lafargue. Nor was “spoken propaganda” ignored: when the Anzin miners went on strike in March 1884, Lafargue, Guesde, and the Parti Ouvrier organized a meeting to support them. It was in this context that the party’s National Congress opened in Roubaix on March 29. The POF invited representatives from Europe’s socialist parties to attend. Still, only twenty-six delegates (representing sixty groups) appeared (the German Social Democratic Party feared that by sending a delegate Bismarck’s antisocialist legislation would be prolonged), and an annual congress was renounced for the foreseeable future: French Marxists would concentrate on organizing and on propaganda at the local level.<sup>24</sup>

Delegates discussed ways both to satisfy immediate workers’ demands and to overturn the capitalist order. They defined the role of the party before the revolution as that of providing propaganda and organization, including electoral and all other means of agitation. To defend the revolution against its enemies, the party would place emphasis on seizing power and organizing a proletarian dictatorship. After the revolution, the party, like the state, would begin to disappear. Elaborating on these ideas three years later, Lafargue argued that during the transition from capitalism to socialism, workers were capable of administering the nation’s industrial plants. Even though his party numbered all of two thousand in 1889, was not fully organized, and was itself part of a disunited socialist movement, his optimism was boundless.<sup>25</sup>

The work of the Roubaix Congress was widely publicized, receiving coverage in the bourgeois, as well as the socialist, press. For over a week (April 1 to April 9), the great conservative daily, *Le Temps*, gave it a column a day. Disdainful at first, its reporter came to acknowledge that the Congress enjoyed considerable support.<sup>26</sup> Lafargue complained of the interference by police, who were present. Still, because of the publicity received and because they wished to witness the reputedly stormy meetings, middle-class elements began to attend. However, on hearing an address from the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) read (in German), they condemned the assembled delegates as Prussians. When the Congress came to an end, Lafargue, together with Guesde and Paule Mink, went to nearby Gand, where he had been invited by Belgian socialists. He spoke on the history of the International and credited Marx with its establishment and accomplishments.<sup>27</sup>

Economic crises and political upheavals in the mid-1880s, as well as scattered socialist electoral victories, provided additional grounds for optimism. Lafargue published several articles on the prolonged depression of the 1880s in a short-lived fifth series of *L'Égalité*.<sup>28</sup> Strikes grew more violent and came more frequently. Fear of a cholera epidemic, political discontent, and food and fuel shortages created what Lafargue called a “crisis psychology,” which reinforced his belief in the imminence of revolution and his conviction that agitation and propaganda of Marxist themes would provide the necessary catalysts.<sup>29</sup>

In addition to offering a new lecture course on political economy sponsored by the party's socialist library club (where Lafargue also spoke on Darwin's theory), attending party meetings, preparing articles, and speaking on behalf of striking workers, Lafargue participated in election campaigns and particularly in the Paris municipal election of May 4, 1884. He had briefly considered running,<sup>30</sup> but to show good faith and to avoid competing against other socialists (and no doubt because of limited financial resources), the Parti Ouvrier entered only seven candidates, while Broussists “ran everywhere.” Lafargue was cheered by the results: socialist candidates of all persuasions had amassed over 38,000 votes, doubling the number received in 1881. The new Municipal Council contained two acknowledged socialists, the Blanquist Edouard Vaillant, former minister in the Paris Commune, and an engraver named Chabert. In keeping with Commune tradition, the Council favored municipal autonomy and was hearing suggestions to subsidize striking workers. A column subsequently appeared in Benoît Malon's socialist monthly, *La Revue socialiste*, under the heading, “Socialism in the Municipal Council.” In that publication, proposals such as Vaillant's call for a maximum eight-hour working day on city projects, a Council labor committee, and rent control legislation were applauded and discussed.<sup>31</sup> But enmity between Guesdists and Broussists only intensified. Brousse continued to see Marxist intrigue everywhere, and Marxists continued to denounce his “Possibilists” as anarchists. Maintaining that “there exists in Europe a Marxist faction which has sent to Paris the son-in-law of the master, M. Paul Lafargue [and] a ‘hireling’ [*un acheté*] M. Jules Guesde,” Brousse condemned their socialism as “imported” German doctrine.<sup>32</sup>

To further the advantages to be gained by using election machinery, Lafargue pushed for alliances with other left-wing parties. Only excluded as potential allies were anarchists, who, he said, provided in-

formants, police spies, and agents provocateurs. The police noted that he had pressed for a coalition with Radicals for the municipal elections. Certainly, he appeared increasingly anxious to cooperate with Vaillant, whose behavior he described as “very fine and not at all Blanquist.” Lafargue had understood Blanquism as focusing on political and not economic issues, but he observed that in calling for collectivism Vaillant was sounding more and more like a Marxist.<sup>33</sup>

Vaillant had joined the Marxists on the International’s General Council but broke with the IWMA at the time of The Hague Congress. Because he believed that republican reforms would further the revolutionary cause, he fought for them on the Paris Municipal Council and consequently agreed with Engels on the necessity of a “bourgeois republic” to permit “direct class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie until the crisis is reached.” For one biographer, he was perhaps the only French socialist in the 1880s to defend this strategy systematically.<sup>34</sup>

Hence in the four decades between the Commune and 1914, Marxism in France for practical purposes meant not only Guesde, Lafargue, and their colleagues, but also Vaillant and the Blanquists associated with him. The Guesdists, one can argue, could not have imposed themselves upon the reviving workers’ movement of the 1880s had they not been able to form a tactical alliance with the Blanquist survivors of the Commune.<sup>35</sup> Even so, it took two decades before these Blanquists fully accepted the alien Marxist principles of internationalism and class war that they had long opposed. Among those Blanquists who retained strong patriotic sentiments, many came to support the Boulangist cause at the end of the decade.

Lafargue, on the other hand, still saw the nation as he had in the 1860s: as a bourgeois creation. The POF appreciated the propaganda value of elections but rejected reforms as “crumbs dropped from the government table, more harmful than useful because of the illusions they created.” Although Vaillant rejected the Marxist characterization of reform legislation and insisted that workers must participate in all aspects of national life, he nevertheless published Lafargue’s brochures on American grain and *The Right to Be Lazy* in the newspaper he launched in 1883, *Le Républicain socialiste du centre*. He agreed with Lafargue that in science and materialism lay the sole sources of truth and morality.<sup>36</sup>

A grudging respect had developed between Lafargue and Molinari, the editor of *Le Journal des économistes*, who had published the for-

mer's article on American wheat and who, Lafargue believed, to appear open-minded might allow him to reply to Paul Leroy-Beaulieu's attack on collectivism.<sup>37</sup> Leroy-Beaulieu, a leading establishment economist, regularly refuted critics of liberal orthodoxy and made skillful use of invective to discredit them rather than engage them on a serious intellectual level. Earlier he had called Lafargue's *The Right to Be Lazy* "a hymn to laziness."<sup>38</sup> Here he sought to refute Marx's theory of surplus value, but the criticism soon became an attack on the man. He described Marx as a "plagiarist" of Proudhon and as a rival of Lassalle, and Marx's arguments as "childish and sophistical propositions." Incensed at this denunciation of his father-in-law's work, Lafargue derived satisfaction that Marx's thought was at last getting the attention it deserved. But although more socialists were seeing *Capital* as the "bible" of the working class, liberal critics had uniformly ignored or denounced it. Publication had been permitted two years after the Commune only because few expected potential revolutionaries to understand German metaphysics.<sup>39</sup>

Lafargue objected to Leroy-Beaulieu's criticism that Marx had not described an alternative socialist society. As a scientist, Marx might criticize reality, Lafargue wrote, but he could not "construct a fantasy new world." Rejecting Leroy-Beaulieu's insistence that capitalism possessed a prehistoric existence, Lafargue dismissed him as an apologist who argued that progress depended on the free association that permitted "energetic men" to cooperate, and on the free circulation of capital that allowed the application of discoveries and inventions. For Leroy-Beaulieu, collectivism "sapped man's creative abilities and would lead to retrogression and a return to primitive times."<sup>40</sup> For Lafargue, all this meant only continued capitalist tyranny.

Upon reading the book, Lafargue stated his intention to write an article in rebuttal and boldly requested, and received, assurances that Molinari would publish it. He asked whether Engels would look at the article and comment on it, obviously hopeful that if he cited Leroy-Beaulieu's charges, Engels would be enticed to help. This was the first of several times that Lafargue would seek such assistance. A year later, for example, he sent Engels a list of questions related to linguistical research he was doing, questions on Greek and Latin terms and on Vico's philological observations, for an article he hoped to publish in the prestigious *Revue philosophique*.<sup>41</sup>

The cautious Engels agreed to help, but only after he had read Leroy-Beaulieu's book for himself. And during his seaside holiday (at



Worthing, near Brighton), Engels took time from his correspondence, his own research on the origin of the family, the preparation from Marx's notes of the subsequent volumes of *Capital*, and his various translations, to read Lafargue's essay and send back a page-by-page critique covering everything from spelling to conceptual errors. His comments ranged from Lafargue's analysis of the birth of capitalism to the accuracy of examples chosen by Lafargue to support his generalizations, and Engels did not mince words. Lafargue's characterization of a capitalist, for example, was rejected out of hand. "The producer," Engels wrote, "becomes one only at the point when he employs his instrument *to exploit the paid work of another*," and in exasperation he asked, "How is it possible that you failed to make this distinction?" Lafargue was advised "to reread *Capital* (and not Deville's abridgement of it) seriously from beginning to end, with B[eaulieu]'s book beside [him]. . ."<sup>42</sup>

Engels admitted that he had spoken "frankly" and hoped that Lafargue would not be "annoyed" by his criticism, but "the matter is too serious, if you missed your mark, the whole Party would suffer for it." Gratefully, but tamely, Lafargue replied he wanted to provoke Beaulieu into replying and had had to cut extensively. In a liberal spirit, Molinari published Lafargue's lengthy reply.<sup>43</sup> Encouraged, Lafargue now informed Engels that he was preparing a statistical work to contest the claim of Leroy-Beaulieu and other bourgeois economists that wealth was becoming more widely distributed. He wanted to demonstrate that, on the contrary, it was becoming increasingly more concentrated. To prove his case, he would consult almanacs to get population figures and use the Ministry of Finance Library when it reopened in the fall.<sup>44</sup>

In spite of Molinari's request, Leroy-Beaulieu did not reply but rather passed his pen to Maurice Block, a member of the French Institute. In the October issue of *Le Journal des économistes*, the latter answered Lafargue. In the subsequent issue, Lafargue, who had received prior authorization to do so, replied to Block's criticisms of his article in the form of a letter to the editor. His tone was sarcastic, causing Laura to admit that she was "astonished" that the article, with its "insults and frivolous tone," was published. Lafargue was clearly pleased "to hold up to ridicule official economics and its most reputable spokesman."<sup>45</sup> Had he anticipated Max Weber in identifying "Protestantism, with its abolition of saints and their holidays, its condemnation of the right to welfare, and its theory of grace [as] the

veritable religious expression of the mode of capitalist production"? Certainly Engels found the reply "excellent, from the standpoint of content as well as style."<sup>46</sup>

Similarly, Lafargue replied to an anticollectivist article published by Herbert Spencer, which denounced any government intervention "carrying us to the desired ideal of the socialist" as unnatural in the Darwinian order. Lafargue countered that private property led to slavery and misery, and that capitalist wage slavery constituted an even greater bondage. Statistics from *Capital* were cited to show that capitalist society was creating the very bureaucracy abhorred by Spencer. And almost twenty years before Peter Kropotkin explored the question, Lafargue described such examples of "mutual aid" in the animal kingdom as males sacrificing themselves for females and for their young. People expected to be lied to, toadied to, and cheated, he insisted, not because these behaviors are inherent but because they were the "necessary products of the bourgeois social milieu." He maintained that such behaviors were conspicuously absent in authentic communistic societies. In a subsequent article, Lafargue pointed to a statistical correlation between criminal acts in France and the prevailing price of wheat.<sup>47</sup>

Together with Eleanor, Laura too was defending her father from criticism she regarded as unjust. In a letter published in the SPD's *Sozial Demokrat*, the two sisters responded to Bismarck's accusation that Ferdinand Blind, who had unsuccessfully attempted to assassinate the German chancellor, was a disciple of Marx. Their father, they protested, never showed an interest in having individuals assassinated and in any case had no rapport with Blind, who was motivated by the belief that his success would spare his country civil strife.<sup>48</sup>

Taking a respite from defending the faith, Laura vacationed with Engels in the summer of 1884 to escape the Paris heat and a feared cholera epidemic. A worried Paul had asked Engels to invite Laura to join him at the English seaside. On her return, the Lafargues continued to look after the Longuet children, occasionally taking one or another for a few days, regardless of their own cramped quarters. Longuet, himself, they found uncommunicative and hostile, and they intensely disliked Longuet's mother, who would otherwise care for them. However sincere their concern for the children, the Lafargues' hospitality provided yet another excuse for asking Engels for funds.<sup>49</sup> Yet family matters were set aside when Lafargue intensified efforts to publish, particularly in the area of literary criticism and cultural anthropology.

### 3 Beyond All Possible Bounds

In the months that followed, Lafargue's speaking schedule became heavier than ever. On December 11, 1884, he spoke to delegates of the Groupes des Chambres Syndicales on the unemployment crisis; the next night, he spoke to the Cercle des Egaux du XI<sup>e</sup> Arrondissement on reconciling socialists and anarchists; earlier he had addressed the Fédération Socialiste Révolutionnaire du Centre on the forthcoming German elections and the German socialist party's chances in them. He averaged a talk every other day, although according to one police report he had refused to speak at a meeting because of incessant anarchist interruptions. Sometimes he chose scholarly themes, such as a lecture on feudalism given the previous June 11. He spoke to any available audience: seventeen people heard him discuss the origins of the family, and a group of apparently tolerant businessmen was told that the economic crisis was worldwide and that solutions to it included public works projects and easier credit. The life of a revolutionary, at least this one, if there is no revolution, appears filled with endless propaganda; the speeches and lectures never cease, nor does newspaper work, more scholarly pursuits, and, on occasion, running for office.<sup>1</sup>

This routine was interrupted on May 21, 1885, when Lafargue was suddenly arrested and returned to Sainte-Pélagie because of his refusal to pay the one-hundred-franc fine imposed two years earlier. (Laura became aware of this only on receiving a note from him the next day asking her to visit him in prison and to bring reading material.) An earlier postponement had expired, but he had not then been incarcerated. Why was he arrested now? Was it because the authorities were waiting for a propitious moment and feared that Lafargue might be succeeding in attempts to bring the socialist factions together for the October national legislative elections?<sup>2</sup>

Puzzled and upset that her husband preferred going to prison rather than paying the fine (with funds promised by the party but refused by

Paul, who wanted the money to remain in its treasury), Laura was relieved to learn that he would after all go back to Sainte-Pélagie's political wing rather than a less comfortable debtor's cell. Even so, conditions had deteriorated: he found "bugs everywhere" and the food so bad that he brought in his own, which meant that costs doubled and hence appeals to Engels sent more frequently than ever.<sup>3</sup>

Lafargue remained in prison two months, until July 21, and he spent much of the time drafting a long essay on Victor Hugo, who had died the day after Lafargue's return to Sainte-Pélagie. At the time of the state funeral, Lafargue was struck by the mass adulation of the great poet, and his pamphlet condemned Hugo's "legendary" glory as an imposture serving to camouflage the real condition of the class struggle: he saw the poet not as a demigod but as wholly representative of his class, that is, of bourgeois democracy. Regardless of his opposition to the Second Empire, Hugo was a social conservative, admired by the middle classes precisely because they saw themselves reflected in his writings.<sup>4</sup>

In the winter of 1869–1870, Lafargue had begun preparing a series of articles on Hugo, probably intended for Blanqui's stillborn newspaper *La Renaissance*, but it is not clear whether he then admired Hugo's opposition to the Second Empire and later changed his opinion or whether he was hostile at the outset. Certainly Lafargue must have resented Hugo's denigration of socialism as relegating humanity to the regimentation of the convent, monastery, or barracks. Disgusted by the huge demonstrations and the national show of grief evoked by Hugo's death fifteen years later, he was prompted to finish his attack.<sup>5</sup>

The poet's last birthdays were given all the trappings of national holidays; an amnesty had been declared; an arch of triumph had been raised; and a street had been named after him so that friends could write to him "on his avenue." This was the image that Lafargue set out to contest. Cries of "the immortal is dead" and "France is widowed," the closing of the stock exchange, and Hugo's entombment in the Pantheon scarcely squared with Lafargue's denunciation of him as "this greatest of charlatans" and "this reactionary humbug." The "legend" stood in need of revision.

"Acclaimed by contemporaries," Lafargue wrote, "[Hugo] wins their applause only because he flatters their tastes and their passions, and expresses their thoughts and their sentiments in a language they can understand." Still, Lafargue acknowledged that any writer who "consecrates the infatuation of the public, whatever his literary merits

and demerits, acquires by this sole fact a great historical value and becomes what Emerson called a representative type of a class and of an epoch.”<sup>6</sup>

Lafargue did not pretend to have studied Hugo’s poetry, although according to Laura he did “reread the greatest part of his works.” In addition to his notes, Lafargue relied on as much negative criticism of the poet and of the man as he could find: for example, that accusing him of enriching himself while ruining his publishers and of adjusting his politics to suit prevailing economic currents.<sup>7</sup> Lafargue’s technique lay in combining the “positive and historical” method defined by Sainte-Beuve, which sought the man through his work and which claimed to present the truth about the man, and Marxist analysis, which considered the individual writer as inseparable from the social class represented in his work. Hugo’s political gyrations were seen as the result of a concern with making and keeping money; his opposition to the Empire, as personally motivated; and his anger at Napoleon III and his cohorts, as turning popular attention from seeking the real (i.e., economic) causes of social misery. In so doing, his *Napoléon le Petit* served the interests of the possessing classes.

Against a backdrop of national adoration, Lafargue’s attack is understandable. But it makes most sense when put in the context of a forty-year effort to destroy the existing bourgeois cultural climate and to create a new one consistent with proletarian values. In *The Right to Be Lazy* and in newspaper articles, Lafargue had placed emphasis on the importance of culture and its relations to politics, and the causal connection of both to economic forces. *La Légende* was part of the larger campaign to discredit a prevailing bourgeois ideology that had been accepted by workers. As an admirer of the eighteenth century and of the bourgeoisie’s revolutionary role in undermining the feudal frame of reference before the outbreak of the 1789 revolution, Lafargue wanted to take up the struggle fought by that century’s revolutionary pamphleteers and similarly undermine an all-pervasive nineteenth-century bourgeois ideological domination.

He tried to show that Hugo exalted a repressive class in power. While acknowledging that Hugo’s *Les Châtiments* displayed turbulent passion, Lafargue portrayed the poet as a shrewd businessman who practiced conservative politics before 1849, who at best ignored and at worst opposed the June Days and the Paris Commune, and who rejected socialism. Hugo’s romantic writings appealed to the bourgeoisie, who then valued sentimentalism and virtuosity of form. (That his

writings were also valued by workers was precisely what prompted Lafargue to launch his attack.) In France's "opportunistic Republic" of the 1880s, Lafargue criticized an opportunistic writer, charging that Hugo embraced the republican ideal only after his rejection by the Bonapartist clique.

Accordingly, *La Légende* was as much a violent attack on bourgeois liberalism as on Hugo: on its "demagoguery and reactionary practice"; on its "derisory philanthropy and its negation of the class struggle"; on its "alleged love of 'les misérables' and its "repression of strikes"; on its "exaltation of equality" and its "defense of the strong box"; on its "verbal pacifism and its preparation for war"; on its "preaching of reconciliation of rich and poor, of bosses and workers, of hangmen and their victims." Throughout his career, Lafargue was to take pleasure in exposing bourgeois inconsistencies; in showing how that class disguised its interests and prejudices under the appearance of "eternal truths"; and in contrasting the "hypocritical moralists," typical of the triumphant bourgeoisie of the nineteenth century, with the "bold materialists," typical of the revolutionary bourgeoisie of the eighteenth century.<sup>8</sup>

Was this literary criticism? Hugo's works, aside from *Les Châtiments* and *Les Misérables*, were scarcely evoked; instead, Lafargue relied on journalistic and biographical accounts. Hugo's plays were ignored, and virtually no verse was cited. Lafargue was not about to fall into the trap he had criticized romantic writers for failing to avoid: that of preferring form at the expense of content. Even so, he showed originality in shedding light on the political significance of a literary work and on the career of a writer—which often unfolds in spheres other than that of pure poetry. In subjecting a literary work to this kind of historical (in contrast to Taine's sociological) analysis and by audaciously refusing to join in a universal chorus of praise, Lafargue broke new ground.<sup>9</sup>

In earlier writings, Lafargue had insisted on literature as an expression of class interests. "It is positive interests that have propelled human action," he said. "Religious, philosophical, and political principles are only pretexts, imperfectly masking the economic interests of the individuals and of the classes that constitute the social body." Literature was no exception; it was to be read in the same light as morals, jurisprudence, and philosophy.<sup>10</sup>

Whether legitimist or republican, Hugo, like other romantics, was seen by Lafargue as satisfying bourgeois tastes. More importantly,

Hugo's political writings, which focused on such individuals as Louis Napoleon, shifted public attention from the economic bases of human despair and from those seeking revolutionary remedies. *Les Misérables* was far from constituting a "socialist bible." Coming as it did thirty years after the works of Eugène Sue, it could shock "only a Lamartine" in its description of a man sent to the galleys for stealing bread and of his daughter prostituting herself to feed the bastard of the bourgeois who abandons her when pregnant. "The enthusiasm for Hugo has gone so far beyond all possible bounds that I was not able to stand it," he wrote Engels.<sup>11</sup> In an article that took the entire first page (June 14, 1885) in *La Défense des travailleurs*, a socialist newspaper published in Reims, he denounced Hugo as "a swindler" and "a speculator." And in denouncing Hugo, Lafargue hoped to spur workers to find and develop a new, working-class culture.

The pamphlet could find no publisher. Not until 1888 did it appear in print (in German) in *Die Neue Zeit* (where Engels read and praised it), and not until 1891 was the French language version published, in Malon's *Revue socialiste*—and then, because Malon and his entourage held Hugo in high esteem, only after a disclaimer of responsibility. Together with other writings of Lafargue, it reappeared in 1902 in a reedited version, was rediscovered in 1936, and was condemned again to oblivion. Finally, on the hundredth anniversary of the death of Hugo, it was published alone.<sup>12</sup>

One day, when visited by Guesde, Deville, and other friends, Lafargue received a copy of the long-awaited second volume of *Capital*. He described how, because none of them was able to read German, they "handled with respect and joy the awe-inspiring volume . . . But like monkeys turning over and over nuts that they cannot crack, we opened and leafed through the book so full of mystery for us, marveling at the wealth of algebraic formulae, veritable cabalistic signs to us . . . Happily, here and there in this book, which made us feel so much at sea, we came across a few French quotations."<sup>13</sup> Lafargue asked Engels for "a dozen lines" about the volume for the new weekly newspaper (*Le Socialiste*) scheduled to appear in late August and on whose editorial board he was to sit.

Lafargue was more impressed—because he was able to read it—by Engels's *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, available in Pasquale Martignetti's Italian translation. (The first edition, published in Zurich in 1884, was in German.) "For the first time I saw daylight," he wrote Engels. "When you traced progress from

polygamy to monogamous marriage, it was a revelation to me,” and Lafargue predicted success for the book in France, a success not confined to socialist circles, because he believed the work would be welcomed by anthropologists and sociologists.<sup>14</sup> Lafargue later admitted, “it is your book on the family which, step by step, led me to the study of mythological fables which preserve for us in the form of myth the primitive customs of . . . the clans of diverse origins which, by merging, were to become the Greeks.” Engels had anticipated Lafargue’s enthusiasm: “there are things in it just in his line,” he told Laura.<sup>15</sup>

*The Origin of the Family* drew inspiration from the American anthropologist Lewis Morgan’s *Ancient Society*, published seven years earlier. Marx—and Engels—were impressed with Morgan’s attempt to relate stages of cultural development, especially of the family, to private property and class distinctions. Influenced by nineteenth-century views of cultural evolution and progress, Marx too had seen cultures moving from primitive communism to slave-based societies, and then to capitalism, and he of course placed emphasis on the struggle between social classes for control of the means of production. Marx and Engels, then, believed that in Morgan’s scheme they had found confirmation of their belief that successive stages of cultural progress issued from changes in the “mode of production,” here the coexistence of the development of agriculture and the transition from savagery to barbarism. In Marx’s papers, Engels had found a detailed abstract of Morgan’s book drafted in 1880–1881, and he was more convinced than ever that Morgan, independently of Marx and himself, had “discovered afresh in America the materialist conception of history” and that private property was not eternal and not necessarily the last stage in human development.<sup>16</sup>

*The Origin of the Family* contrasted the communal nature of primitive society with subsequent exploitive relationships. It showed the supremacy of women in the communistic households of primitive society, inheritance in the female line, and how the status of males advanced with the development of agriculture and the domestication of animals. Only then, Engels argued, did the male line of descent and paternal inheritance begin to prevail. And since descent through the male line meant that paternity must be certain, it followed that the wife must be economically dependent on the male head of the family, and this in turn accounted for her exclusion from civil and political participation.<sup>17</sup> Hence for Engels patriarchy and private property pos-



sessed similar origins. These considerations led him to equate “full freedom of marriage [with] the abolition of capitalist production.” Matriarchy offered to Engels—and accordingly to Lafargue, who accepted his interpretation and was to use it as a point of departure for future writings—the vision of a world before the advent of patriarchal capitalism. Indeed, Engels’s study provided the basis of Marxist anthropology—and raised the relevant questions for non-Marxists—at least until the middle of the twentieth century.<sup>18</sup>

Engels’s insistence that the separation of the family from the clan and the institution of monogamous marriage constituted the social expressions of the development of private property deeply impressed Lafargue, as did his argument that monogamy afforded the means by which property could be individually inherited and that consequently there was an intimate connection between the emergence of the family as an economic male-dominated unit and the development of class distinctions. The family was not always patriarchal and bourgeois-like: it had a history.

In 1886 Lafargue discussed Engels’s book—Laura was to correct the French translation, which appeared in 1893—in a series of articles in the POF’s new newspaper, *Le Socialiste*, and soon began to use it, together with his reading of Vico, as a basis for his own investigations into Greek mythology. In his attempt to identify if not a pattern, at least some otherwise obscure views of the unrecorded past, Vico had relied on language, mythology, and the rites of religion. He was among the first to see myths not as falsehoods or fanciful versions of past events but as evidence of early outlooks and beliefs.<sup>19</sup> Engels’s choice of early Greece to illustrate the emergence of the family and the state influenced Lafargue enormously. The predominance of women, for example, was for Engels revealed in Aeschylus’s *Oresteia* trilogy, in which Orestes, who murdered his mother Clytemnestra because she had killed his father (Agamemnon), was acquitted by the gods.<sup>20</sup> Fully half of Lafargue’s articles analyzed the *Oresteia*, to which Engels had referred in passing. Lafargue argued that the forced subjugation of women to men issued from the need to install the system of private property: monogamy and known paternity were necessary for bequeathing it, which was in turn a necessary prerequisite for the new system of private ownership. A preview of one such article, on matriarchy, appeared in the respectable *Nouvelle Revue*.<sup>21</sup>

In yet another series of articles attempting to view anthropological themes from a Marxist perspective, Lafargue considered the “evolu-

tion of morality.” He rejected the “bourgeois” view of a past rife with immorality and of a capitalism deserving of praise for having made realities of “peace,” “reason,” “justice,” and “progress.” No wonder, he wrote, that the writings of Comte, Mill, and Spencer were so pleasing to bourgeois businessmen, who equated capitalist growth with moral improvement. Bourgeois morality was but an apology for bourgeois action, or for the lack of it. We may not practice infanticide, Lafargue wrote, but under capitalism infant mortality in large industrial cities has risen steadily and the treatment of women has worsened. Indeed, it was the moral degeneration of values—particularly those that allowed “bourgeois parasites” to live off workers—that accounted for bourgeois advancement. In antiquity, he argued, patricians and nobles showed themselves capable of self-sacrifice and heroism for the sake of their cities; in contrast, the bourgeois ideal lies in the acquisition of wealth.<sup>22</sup>

On his release, Lafargue seemed none the worse for wear. Laura approvingly noted that he looked “fresh as a daisy . . . works like a *nigger* [*sic*], eats and drinks like a hero, smokes like a London chimney and refuses to be a martyr.” In describing him, the September 27 issue of *Le Cri du peuple* said that “with his white hair that appears powdered, black mustache and black eyes, he looks like one of the French guards who took the Bastille.” Lafargue had longed for his “liberté, liberté chérie,” and his delight in returning to “la belle nature” brought on a short-lived but “serious attack of idleness,” which Laura gladly shared.<sup>23</sup>

Still, he must have quickly thrown himself into preparations for the weekly newspaper, that the Roubaix Congress had wanted to bring out in time for the 1885 national legislative elections. The first issue of *Le Socialiste* appeared on August 29. Lafargue was listed as a member of the editorial board, together with Guesde; Deville; Raoul Fréjac, a delegate at the Roanne Congress and editor-in-chief of a socialist newspaper in Commentry; and Auguste Le Tailleur, one of the founders of the POF in Calais. A party organ, *Le Socialiste* in both format and content appeared even more austere than its predecessor: dedicated to the theoretical enlightenment of the masses, it disdained frivolity and, aside from occasional portraits, rejected drawings and cartoons.

The newspaper was soon plagued with the same financial problems as *L'Egalité*. According to the Paris police, it verged on the point of bankruptcy in 1886 when its editors were sued for a seven-thousand-

franc debt. Lafargue asked the SPD for financial aid in August of that year but was refused. Discouraged, he was not eager to see the newspaper start up again. It failed to publish for two months in 1887, and again from February 1888 to September 1890.<sup>24</sup> Circulation figures remained pitifully small; Willard referred to the newspaper as a *feuille confidentielle*, with few subscribers and with sales falling to under a thousand in the early 1890s. On a visit to Paris, Eleanor Marx managed to secure a copy only by going to the editorial office. The low circulation in large part resulted from the party's decision to make the newspaper "an organ of liaison and education for its activists," that is, to aim its articles at party members rather than at a larger working-class readership, although the editors piously expressed the wish to "educate the proletarian masses." The provincial Marxist press was more successful, forced as it was to include news of greater interest to its readers. Apparently Lafargue was the guiding spirit of the newspaper; Guesde and Deville seldom participated in editorial decision making causing Laura to complain that "the lion's share of work fell to Paul's lot."<sup>25</sup>

To ensure editorial solidarity, contributing writers remained anonymous until mid-1887, although serialized articles by Lafargue and letters from such foreign contributors as Engels were signed. One of the newspaper's four pages was reserved for correspondence, and the back page contained advertisements for books sold by the Bibliothèque Socialiste. *Le Socialiste* took a less strident anti-Possibilist line than had *L'Egalité*, and provided more coverage of the Paris Municipal Council. The first issue carried the beginning of Laura's serialized translation of the *Communist Manifesto* (previously published in *L'Egalité*), and the seventy-sixth carried the beginning of Marx's *Civil War in France*. There were short biographical sketches of leading socialist figures, current and past. Lafargue's first article described a visit he had paid to Louise Michel in prison. He wrote on themes previously explored and to which he would often return: socialism and patriotism; the false patriotism of the bourgeoisie, whose "money always sought the highest return"; the inadequacies of Brousse's municipal socialism; the futility of anarchism; "bourgeois greed" seizing the fruits of scientific discovery; and comments on news of the day.<sup>26</sup> Because its articles were reproduced in regional editions and in other Fédération newspapers, *Le Socialiste*, in spite of its limited circulation, was to prove vital in the education and formation of militant Marxist socialists.

Lafargue was seeking a union of all socialist groups for the forthcoming national legislative election. The defeat of the French at Tonkin at the end of March 1885 and the fall of the Ferry government, in addition to a sharp rise in unemployment, made even the skeptical Laura anticipate a popular upheaval in the wake of an anti-Ferry demonstration—“if the crowds had been larger.” Lafargue wanted to take advantage of the widespread discontent that followed economic depression to bring the scattered forces of the left together.<sup>27</sup> And with the important exception of the Broussists, who insisted on presenting their own list of candidates, socialists in Paris declared a truce and ran on the single ticket of a “Revolutionary Socialist” coalition. Although unhappy with the new voting system of departmental-wide lists, the Guesdists had decided to compete in selected locations. The socialist list in the Seine Department (Paris) included four Blanquists led by Vaillant; five Parti Ouvrier members, including Guesde, Lafargue, and Deville; and three nonaffiliated or “independent” socialists. Several socialists with greater name recognition also ran on lists in ten outlying departments, such as Lafargue in the Allier. Indeed, he seemed to be everywhere. Police informers regarded him as party leader as well as party theoretician, with Guesde playing a subordinate role. The French authorities feared the coalition of socialists that Lafargue was striving to achieve and the call for a projected international workers’ congress, rumors of which were then circulating.<sup>28</sup> The Broussist opposition to any such union sheds light on Lafargue’s repeated references to them as working for the government. Certainly it was in the interests of the authorities to keep the various socialist factions at each other’s throats; and inasmuch as it was the Guesdists who called for a union of socialists, they represented the greater threat to the established order.

Anticipating greater success in the Allier, Lafargue, during the two weeks designated for campaigning, went from village to town, by carriage, by train, and on foot, delivering hour-long speeches. Striking an uncommon note of realism, he could not help but observe that aside from the miners the population was content and reasonably prosperous. Since the Allier had become republican, he told Engels, socialists had been accused by their opponents of splitting the republican vote and benefiting monarchists.<sup>29</sup>

In virtually every instance, the few Marxist candidates who ran were defeated on the first ballot, Lafargue having received only about 2,200 votes in the Allier, and he blamed much of the “shameful de-

feat” on the quarrel between revolutionary socialists and Broussists. Discouraged and downhearted, he feared that monarchists, who did well, would win a great victory on the second, or runoff, vote. The country, he concluded, had condemned the “political mistakes” and “crimes of the republicans”: their colonial expeditions, budgetary deficits, crushing taxes, and squandered loans.<sup>30</sup>

However, Engels rightly predicted that monarchism had no future in France and that the Republic remained the regime that least divided Frenchmen. He was pleased that conservative republicans, the so-called “Opportunists,” had suffered many defeats, which had required pressure from both the far left and the far right. It was illusory to have hoped for any better results. The right did better than expected, but that made the political situation more revolutionary. Engels anticipated that in a choice between monarchists and Radicals, French voters would assure the survival of the Republic, even to the extent of supporting Clemenceau and his Radicals. Should the latter come to power as saviors of the Republic, they would be forced to keep their promises, “precisely the situation we need.”<sup>31</sup> Lafargue and the French Marxists found this analysis so perceptive that they published Engels’s lengthy letter in its entirety in the October 12 issue of *Le Socialiste* (after Engels corrected the text to assure himself that he would be quoted correctly).

And on the runoff vote of October 18, republicans won enough seats to retain their plurality. The list of Paris socialist candidates, however, garnered only about 46,000 votes, a mediocre result compared to the 140,000 averaged by each of the four major lists.<sup>32</sup> Still, Lafargue was ecstatic that a handful of socialist (if not Marxist) candidates was swept to victory. They included Emile Basly, a former miner who now spoke on their behalf; Zephirin Camélinat, a bronze fitter, a founding member of the International, and a Communist; and Antide Boyer (the only victor associated with the Parti Ouvrier), a Marseilles worker and participant in that city’s Commune, currently serving on its municipal council. The 1881 Chamber had contained only one avowed (nonaffiliated) socialist, the poet Clovis Hugues (who was reelected).<sup>33</sup> Even so, it was clear that the Marxist rejection of reform, and hence of the parliamentary path to socialism, had proved costly. Most Frenchmen (in liberal-democratic France) did not share the view that reliance on the parliamentary process was useless; they rejected the orthodox (German) strategy, which maintained that democracy and socialism could be achieved only by destroying the existent state.

As was so often the case with Lafargue, electoral activities went hand in hand with more theoretical work: spoken propaganda supplemented written propaganda and corresponded to the image of the party as propaganda machine. In the midst of the election campaign, Lafargue developed themes he had previously lectured on, in a philological article designed to reveal the materialistic origins of such abstractions as goodness and justice. It was accepted for publication in a major scholarly journal, *La Revue philosophique*. Before the article's publication, he had implored Engels to see whether his theory was tenable and whether the evidence he had accumulated was well used.<sup>34</sup>

Her husband, Laura said, was working intensely and was always in libraries, and she blamed an eye irritation he was suffering from on an excess of reading. He needed a change of scenery and occupation. There is no question but that he was more interested in intellectual pursuits than was Guesde. Many years later, an acquaintance recollected that "Lafargue was never so happy as when one showed him he was wrong."<sup>35</sup> Was he compensating for mediocre talents as a speaker? Some critics (Malon and Brousse) doubted that he produced all the material ascribed to him: they credited Laura with having written his "serious" articles, which he only spoiled by adding "irreverent jokes," a charge that delighted Lafargue.<sup>36</sup> Laura did prepare German versions of his articles, many of which were published in *Die Neue Zeit*, and, of course, provided him with translations from the German. The English periodical press, *Today* and *Progress*, published him, as did a Russian periodical, *The Annals of the Country*, and, to an ever-increasing extent, such well-established French journals as *Le Journal des économistes*, *L'Economiste*, *Le Bulletin de la Société d'Anthropologie*, *La Nouvelle Revue*, and *La Revue philosophique*.

On February 27, 1886, *Le Socialiste* began to publish his "Religion of Capital" in serialized form. A series of imaginary dialogues, it constituted both a satire on religion and an exposé of some fundamental Marxist economic themes. It was reprinted in the same newspaper in 1896 and in the Lille, Lyons, and Montluçon socialist press. In the French Marxist press, it proved as successful as the combined serializations of all the collected works of Marx and Engels. Together with *The Right to Be Lazy*, it was Lafargue's most caustic pamphlet, although not as extensively reprinted.<sup>37</sup> One section took the form of a conversation between Paul Bert (Gambetta's minister of education and spokesman for a liberal perspective), Herbert Spencer, Cardinal Manning, Huxley, and the positivist Pierre Laffite, all discussing the social-

ist “threat.” They agreed that simply to substitute liberalism for religion was inadequate; what was needed was a “religion of capitalism.” Worshiped would be capital, “the universal God.” An imaginary catechism was drafted, which dwelt on the necessity of labor. Believers were ordered to work “from infancy to death, to work in sunlight and in gaslight, to work day and night, to work on the land, under the land, on the sea, to work everywhere and forever,” and to teach their children to do the same. The “rights” allowed included enjoyment of the “innocent distraction of electing legislators who draft laws to enslave us but prohibit us from listening to socialists.” Elsewhere could be found “The Courtesan’s Sermon,” which exalted her as sacred because of her ability to sell a commodity; a parody of Ecclesiastes but with Marxist themes; capitalist prayers in the style of the Lord’s Prayer; and the “Lamentations of Job-Rothschild,” who wondered why he was abandoned when he had been a good capitalist and had dutifully starved his workers.

But it was in the journals of the “grande bourgeoisie,” such as *La Nouvelle Revue* and *La Revue philosophique*, that Lafargue longed to publish, to make himself known, to win the attention of publishers, and, because these journals paid more handsomely than did the socialist press, to earn desperately needed money. He also believed that his appearance in prestigious journals might make it easier to find a French publisher for Engels’s *The Origin of the Family*, which he hoped to translate with Laura.<sup>38</sup> *Le Journal des économistes*, an organ of “economic orthodoxy,” in July 1884 had published his lengthy article on American grain production, which restated some of the ideas he had worked out earlier. He followed this in the September issue with an exposé of Marx’s theory of surplus value in an attempt to refute Leroy-Beaulieu’s criticisms. And in 1885 *La Revue philosophique* published his study of the materialistic origins of the ideas of goodness and justice.

Lafargue’s wish to write for celebrated journals accounted for his attempts to introduce himself to the literary salon life of Paris. He spent occasional literary evenings at the home of Madame Juliette Adam. One of the most renowned of Third Republic hostesses, intensely nationalist, a feminist who rejected Proudhon’s insistence on female inferiority as ridiculous and who spoke out for reform in matters of divorce and property law, she directed *La Nouvelle Revue*, an important “republican” journal founded in 1879 to offset the influence of the distinguished but Orleanist *Revue des deux mondes*. Lafar-

gue was encouraged by her willingness in 1882 to publish a work of Jules Vallès, the former Communard and now editor of *Le Cri du peuple*, a newspaper that welcomed both socialist and anarchist viewpoints. The night she agreed to publish two of Lafargue's articles so excited him that he awakened Laura on his return to tell her the news.<sup>39</sup>

However, Madame Adam's willingness to publish Vallès had cost the journal subscriptions and angered other readers who resented the "favor" done "a red." Consequently, only Lafargue's first article for her appeared under his name; seven others appeared under the pseudonym "Fergus." The essay on matriarchy was published in March 1886. However, she appended a conclusion that upset Lafargue: although Adam agreed that the patriarchal family was a relatively recent social institution brought about by the growth of private property, to appease her more conservative readers she predicted subsequent social violence should society ever return to matriarchy. Moreover, she deleted Lafargue's concluding sentence, which had pointed to the relationship he found between the emerging patriarchal family and mounting "disorder, crime, and degrading force."<sup>40</sup>

In the eight articles published in *La Nouvelle Revue* between 1886 and 1890, Lafargue repeatedly illustrated the theme that there are no eternal moral truths and the Vichian view that all societies pass through analogous stages of development. His subject matter ranged from the previously mentioned essay on the family to the development of the French language, and his sources included Greek tragedies, popular songs of the French countryside, and contemporary novels. A historical sketch on the evolution of morality appeared at the end of the year (1886). An article on adultery, which Adam was reluctant to publish because of its subject matter, explored the view that the relationship between men and women evolved with economic conditions.<sup>41</sup> Studies of Rousseau (March 15, 1890) and of the origins of private property (February 1, 1890, which was to become a book) completed the cycle of articles.

Lafargue never got to write his history of the French Revolution or on the role of the crowd within it, which particularly interested him, but he had begun to explore the social and cultural changes brought by the Revolution, especially the transfer of the experience to succeeding generations through language and literature. The study of folk-songs that both celebrated marriage and lamented the passing of happiness and carefree joys, with examples drawn from the Basque,



Gascon, Breton, Vendée, and Picardy regions, saw such poetry as a collective expression of community sentiments.<sup>42</sup> The long study on “the French language before and after the Revolution” argued that language showed the effects of popular social change. In asserting that the French language was affected by the French Revolution and that like moral ideas language cannot be isolated from the social context within which it develops, Lafargue again elaborated on themes initially set forth by Vico.<sup>43</sup>

Aristocratic predominance, Lafargue wrote, had long forced a polished French on the written language. Before the Revolution, the ascending bourgeoisie took advantage of the discomfiture of the aristocracy and of their own power to bring about linguistic changes that enriched the abstract and analytical French of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century nobility. The language used by a Voltaire could not convey the nuances of love or the taste for nature, but that of a Chateaubriand could. Indeed, in describing the linguistic renovation favored by the Revolution and the subsequent impact on literature, Lafargue identified romanticism as the literary expression of the victorious bourgeoisie. Later in the nineteenth century, he noted, these same middle classes were seeking to restore the “purity” of aristocratic French.

In the study of linguistics and folklore, and specifically in variations of languages and in subjects of popular songs, Lafargue had searched for the social rapports they revealed and the actions they supported. Similar economic and social conditions explained the form and expression of analogous thought, and a materialist interpretation was accordingly provided. If societies passed through similar stages, as both Vico and Marx believed, so did linguistic development. In the final analysis, language was related to the development of productive forces and reflected economic realities, including class alliances and class conflicts. In seeking power, the bourgeoisie had allied itself with the masses and accepted the language commonly used, but once in power it turned away from popular language and mass literature and art.

The French language in the eighteenth century, even before the outbreak of revolution, was losing its aristocratic civility and taking on the more democratic style of the bourgeoisie. Classical forms had begun to disappear together with feudalism, a clear demonstration of the impact of social circumstances on language. The French Academy, in an attempt to preserve classical forms by eliminating vulgarities, had

created an “artificial language, a classical language, a language of the aristocracy.” Citing Vico, Lafargue said that language, in a state of constant change, develops and dies. During the eighteenth century, as financiers and wealthy bourgeois became part of aristocratic families, the center of social gravity had moved from Versailles to Paris. Language changed as well; once polished, it became that of the shop and street. Thanks in part to the encyclopedists, who wrote for the educated and intelligent sectors of the middle classes, eighteenth-century literature became a literature of combat. Only in their salons did the nobility, as well as those bourgeois who aped them, continue to use old forms of the language, even exaggerating its purity.<sup>44</sup>

Contemporary scholars have buttressed Lafargue’s observations in pointing to revolutionaries who themselves recognized the need to distinguish between the prerevolutionary and revolutionary French language. In a report to the Committee of Public Safety in 1794, Barère referred to the former as a class language spoken by the ancien régime’s elite, a language “one had to spew out . . . in a special way to appear well-bred.” Similarly, Condorcet maintained that “correct French had separated people into two classes,” and Talleyrand observed that if thought was to be free, language must be egalitarian.<sup>45</sup> By linking linguistic development and the class struggle, Lafargue identified the cultural—in addition to the political—domination that allowed a ruling class to maintain control. In so doing, Lafargue the activist and Lafargue the theorist were one.

Bourgeois romantics, then, made use of language in their pursuit of bourgeois goals. The new language was taken from popular speech, from its epithets and metaphors. The very redundancy of words was used to depict the “frenzy of passions,” and contributed to the romantic style.<sup>46</sup> Chateaubriand used the new language to defend the authority of the Catholic Church, now seen as a bastion of social order, enabling the bourgeoisie to consolidate its power, rein in the new revolutionary class, and bring to an end the now dangerous materialism of the eighteenth century. Previously, the bourgeoisie glorified the idea of progress because it perceived its future as related to progress. Similarly, it made use of materialism to fight clericals and pursue free investigation. But with the emergence of the proletariat and the threat perceived in it, the bourgeoisie abandoned its eighteenth-century ideals and judged as expedient a return to religion. It took up the dogma of the immortality of the soul to hold up to workers the prospect of an afterlife. It rejected what was “its force and grandeur”; denied the

teachings of its thinkers, the Rabelais and Diderots; and no longer understood Molière, who championed the bourgeois class. The seventeenth- and eighteenth-century bourgeoisie had tried to know man and the universe; the romantics distrusted and parodied them.<sup>47</sup> Hence romanticism, like parliamentarianism (designed to permit bourgeois ascendance in government without dislodging the king), served bourgeois purposes. It marked a recourse to cultural politics. "My study," Lafargue wrote Kautsky, "will show that language follows the vicissitudes of the class struggle," and though they noted that Lafargue omitted from his analysis such romantics as Shelley, inclined to revolution rather than reaction, some sympathetic scholars have confirmed the legitimacy of his approach.<sup>48</sup>

Lafargue sent the proofs of his articles to Engels, and the latter, while generally approving, criticized some of his etymological derivations. Lafargue tamely replied that he had followed his sources too closely, but was proud that his articles had attracted "some attention" and some inquiries as to the identity of "Fergus."<sup>49</sup> Still, Lafargue's collaboration with *La Nouvelle Revue* was difficult and proved short-lived because of the Marxist approach used and because the political and economic analysis of moral and literary questions scarcely coincided with the objectives of a leading establishment journal.<sup>50</sup>

That anthropology was becoming a subject of mounting interest for Lafargue was further revealed by the "communication" he sent to a session of the Société d'Anthropologie de Paris and published in that group's *Bulletin*. He discussed both the male circumcision of the Hebrews and female circumcision practiced by West African tribes as both a religious and initiation rite as well as a sign of purity. The rite signified the necessity of sacrificing part of oneself in order to keep the rest, and he tried to relate it to the attempt by primitive societies to free themselves of matriarchy.<sup>51</sup> More extensive anthropological studies were to appear a decade later, after Engels's own research was published.

If critical, Engels was delighted by Lafargue's success: "What with the *Journal des écon[omistes]*, the *Revue philosoph[ique]* and Juliette [*La Nouvelle Revue*]," he told Lafargue, "you are launched into grandly official literature. And, as you write a French more French (because more 16th century and less Parisian) than others do, you should be successful."<sup>52</sup> It was, of course, impossible for Lafargue to master so many subjects in depth; hence his superficiality, which was not helped by his taste for paradox or by what Eduard Bernstein called

his “nervous impatience.” Yet for Bernstein, Lafargue understood what the right questions were and was able to ask them. Bernstein acknowledged that although often critical of the answers, he found Lafargue’s writings in the 1880s as possessing “a lot of fruitful inspiration” and their author as more than a mere popularizer. Lafargue was, Bernstein said, capable of analysis.<sup>53</sup>

Consequently, Lafargue came to be regarded as the philosopher (and Guesde, as the propagandist) of the Parti Ouvrier. His reputation in socialist circles was now such that in June 1888 Vaillant asked him to contribute to a new paper, *L’Homme libre*, but the reply, although apparently negative, is not available.<sup>54</sup> Lafargue’s standing as the authority on Marxism in France, accorded him by his ties to the founders of “scientific socialism,” was thus strengthened. He seemed knowledgeable in a multitude of disciplines: economics, ethnology, history, and science. In 1896 Deville dedicated his book, *Principes socialistes*, to the memory of Marx and Engels, to Guesde, and to Lafargue, “whose articles have given me a more complete knowledge and consequently, more correct understanding of theory.” Even the critical Engels appeared to appreciate his work, however much he qualified his praise: “If he only cared to be a little more careful to certain theoretical considerations (of detail for the most part), he would become a great light of Paris . . .”<sup>55</sup> Soon Engels’s concern that Lafargue’s conclusions went beyond his evidence would be made manifest by French critics.

## 4 The Parisians Have Gone Mad

Of vital importance to French socialism—and hence to Lafargue—was the miners' strike at Decazeville (January–June 1886), which focused attention on social issues when at least two thousand miners walked off their jobs. It led to the formation of a labor coalition in the Chamber of Deputies, and for Engels marked “an important step to the organizational unity of French workers upon a Marxist foundation.”<sup>1</sup>

The miners blamed a reduction in salaries on a new manager. After the strike broke, an enraged mob besieged the office he had taken refuge in and, as with Maigrat in *Germinal*, published the previous year, threw him out the window to be torn to pieces by those outside. A tremor ran through the country, and troops were rushed to the area.<sup>2</sup>

The handful of socialist deputies (six, after the election of 1885) brought the issue to the Chamber floor, and Basly, the former miner, questioned the government, specifically to denounce the “truck system” of individual negotiation. A step was taken toward forming a unified party when socialists of all factions cooperated on a central assistance committee during the six-month duration of the strike. Inadequacies in labor legislation were exposed. Deputies (socialists, but still deputies) traveled to the scene of the strike. Other deputies, including two left-wing Radicals, the lawyer Alexandre Millerand, who defended strikers accused of crimes, and the former philosophy teacher Jean Jaurès, joined them to consider neglected social problems. *La Revue socialiste*, reestablished by Malon the previous year, was exultant and soon predicted the rise of a parliamentary labor party.<sup>3</sup>

The newly formed labor coalition asked for the progressive nationalization of ownership and placed emphasis on social insurance. Otherwise their program resembled that of the Radicals, who largely ignored it. The delighted Engels hailed the appearance of a *parti ouvrier* in the Palais Bourbon as “*the* great event of the year.” He told his friend Friedrich Sorge (in the United States) that having grown from a

sect to a party, the French movement was “strong,” and he identified as its leaders “our people, Guesde, Lafargue, and Deville.”<sup>4</sup>

“Whatever [the Radicals] do,” he said to Lafargue, “they must alienate the masses and drive them to us [and] the reappearance of France on the scene of the proletarian movement . . . will have a tremendous effect everywhere.” He praised the French Marxists for having rallied all revolutionary proletarian elements, which showed up the Possibilists as obstacles to union. Engels was astonished by the Chamber’s March 16 resolution asking the government to improve unhealthy conditions in the nation’s mines: it marked the first time a French Chamber took the side of labor against capital and so marked a significant victory, and he predicted that Paul would eventually win a seat in parliament. Immensely cheered, Lafargue agreed that a “new era” had dawned and only feared that efforts to create a parliamentary group of all views would exclude those “of too scarlet a hue.”<sup>5</sup>

Lafargue worked hard to take advantage of the Decazeville events. Speaking in late February, he described the murder of the manager as a consequence of widespread misery, caused, in turn, “by the complicity of the government with the bourgeoisie.”<sup>6</sup> In particular he supported the election of Ernest Roche, the one-time engraver who had organized Blanqui’s 1879 electoral campaign and now, as a writer on the staff of *L’Intransigeant*, won notoriety for his detailed reports of the strike. Together with another journalist, Roche had been condemned by the local court for publishing false news to prolong the strike and for seeking to turn it into an insurrection. Sentenced to a fifteen-month prison term, he was defended by Millerand, on the grounds that the freedom of the press had been violated. Lafargue had protested the arrest, arguing that Roche spoke for the Decazeville strikers. In *Le Cri du peuple*, Guesde called the sentence “an outrage,” and in a Paris by-election socialists named the newly condemned Roche as a candidate.<sup>7</sup>

According to his wife, Lafargue was “a fixture at the offices of *Le Cri*.” Writing during the day, he published article after article on Roche’s behalf, in addition to his work for *Le Socialiste*. Speaking at one meeting after another, he would arrive home well after midnight, only to be off again at six the following morning. There was no time to visit either Bordeaux or London, though Laura, who supplemented their meager income by giving English lessons, urged him to do so. Receiving only socialist support, Roche was defeated, but he managed to compile a surprising 100,000 votes.<sup>8</sup>

In an article on the strike published by the British journal *Commonweal*, Lafargue applauded the socialists' apparent change in tactics. He spoke of the decade-long propaganda effort carried out by socialists in journals and at public meetings, but with only limited gains achieved. "In fact, it was those already convinced who read our journals and pamphlets, and attended our meetings." But Decazeville had shown how much was possible through parliamentary action and how much could be accomplished by a socialist contingent in the legislature.<sup>9</sup>

In a manner similar to his earlier infatuation with municipal socialism, Lafargue now exaggerated the benefits of parliamentary action. "When a Socialist deputy speaks at the tribune of Parliament," he wrote, "he . . . address[es] . . . the whole of France. His words penetrate to the smallest villages. The bourgeois journals are obliged, willy-nilly, to reproduce his words, to discuss and attack them. Socialism thus spreads from the lecture-hall to the market place." Laura, sardonically, had commented on the socialists' newfound fascination with winning legislative seats: Rival leaders were "already biting off each other's noses . . . This fighting over a cake which not one among them is at all likely to get a mouthful of, is funny enough and silly enough too."<sup>10</sup>

Regardless of his wife's skepticism of socialists competing for votes, Lafargue continued to find socialist representation in parliament useful, not so much to achieve reform as to carry out propaganda by other means. Roche's good showing, moreover, persuaded him that a major event accompanied by a concerted and well-directed political campaign could move the masses. Lafargue would soon find the opportunity to apply these tactics: specifically to raise popular consciousness by capturing a movement set in motion by some force. The force was to be General Boulanger.

Planning was interrupted by new court proceedings. Guesde, Lafargue, Paul de Susini (a radical leftist and self-styled socialist), and Louise Michel were summoned to appear before an examining magistrate to answer charges of incitement to pillage.<sup>11</sup> Marxists had wanted to take advantage of Michel's charismatic personality, and the previous year Lafargue, who had first met her in London on her return from exile in New Caledonia, interviewed Michel for an article in *Le Socialiste*.<sup>12</sup> When he despaired of seeing her in jail, she comforted him by saying it gave her time to write. On June 3, the four spoke at a meeting in the Théâtre du Château d'Eau in a working-class neigh-

borhood in support of the Decazeville miners. Lafargue specifically attacked Baron Alphonse de Rothschild, who directed the French branch of the family's banking establishment. Only three years earlier, the Union Générale, a Catholic bank holding the savings of numerous small depositors, had collapsed chiefly because of mismanagement but also because of pressure from Protestant and Jewish rivals. Economic disaster mingled with anti-Semitic sentiment, and these feelings were shared by workers and leftists who saw the Rothschilds behind every obstacle to social reform.

The police informant present at the meeting alleged that Lafargue threatened Rothschild with bodily injury and that Guesde referred to the "liberating gun" when the day of revolution dawned. Writing to Engels, Laura described the forthcoming trial as providing an "excellent opportunity to break lances against all the Rothschilds, Jewish or Christian."<sup>13</sup>

However, the accused, save for Michel, refused to appear at the proceedings on the grounds that a Bonapartist newspaper editor, who had openly called for a coup d'état and whom the government had indicted along with the socialists, had been freed by the jury. Guesde, Lafargue, and de Susini were each sentenced in absentia to four- to six-month prison terms and fined one hundred francs, a decision so flagrantly unfair that even the moderate press complained. The three men planned to appeal at the Seine assize court's September sitting: only Michel acknowledged that she had spoken in the sense charged.<sup>14</sup>

In the interim, Lafargue continued his speaking engagements and, together with Basly and Boyer, went to the Nord Department. On his return, the Lafargues decided it was again time for Paul to pay a long-deferred visit to his mother, now eighty-three, before, as Laura put it, being "cooped up again in Sainte-Pélagie." Her prediction, however, that the three might very well win their appeal proved accurate when on September 24, to general surprise, they were acquitted.<sup>15</sup> During the proceedings, each had expounded his theory of socialism, which according to Laura constituted an unprecedented defense: "Three socialist orators holding forth for many hours in the coolest and most deliberate fashion, pleading nothing in extenuation of their conduct, but simply explaining for the benefit of a benighted bourgeois president and jury the doctrines of scientific socialism and loudly proclaiming the advent, in the very near future, of a new system of society, and the jury hastening to acquit them to the general and enthusiastic applause of the audience."<sup>16</sup>



Lafargue had told the jurors they must be as amazed as the defendants by the “strange trial.” How can we be accused of incitement to pillage and murder and of disturbing the public order, he asked, when the sole proof consisted of three sentences that a single listener heard and reported? The real defendant was socialism, selected as a scapegoat by the government. Rothschild had been singled out only as a symbol of capitalism. There was no personal animosity: Paul did not even know the man. Then he analyzed economic development in general and the role of the Bank of France (of which Rothschild was a regent), especially in time of economic crisis. He accused financiers of buying off legislators. These remarks evoked repeated applause, and the jury took only fifteen minutes to reach its verdict—one that generated even greater applause.

Lafargue once more overstated the significance of a victory that in retrospect was limited and relatively isolated. Still, at the time socialists, certainly of the Marxist variety, lived in anticipation of an event that would unleash the revolution whose signs they saw everywhere. Their messianism, after the unexpected acquittal, led them to believe that some in the middle class were rallying to socialism. For Paul, the verdict—the first by which propertied elements acquitted socialists because they were socialists—revealed that “the bourgeoisie is ready for some part of our theories.” More soberly, Engels doubted that most would ever come “over to our side” but agreed that the verdict was a “grand victory” and that a bourgeoisie with a revolutionary history of its own, such as the English and particularly the French, “in doing its own work is doing ours.”<sup>17</sup>

Encouraged enough once again to speculate on a postrevolutionary situation, Lafargue began to publish a series of articles (“Le Lendemain de la révolution”) on the subject in *Le Socialiste*. The revolutionary power, he said, could resist a reactionary counteroffensive only if supported by the working masses. It was therefore necessary to win that support by giving immediate satisfaction to their basic needs: food, shelter, and clothing. The nationalization of buildings would then make homes available. Department stores would be expropriated, their goods distributed by committees created for that purpose. Communal restaurants would encourage communal dining, “for the sake of fraternization and equality.” To win peasant support, mortgages and other debts, taxes, and conscription would all be abolished. He assured property owners who actually worked on their farms or in their shops that they would remain proprietors, although not until

the early 1890s would he see his party adopt an agrarian program confirming his promise. In contrast to public services, it was not state ownership of enterprises that mattered, but rather control of them by workers. Salaries, during the immediate postrevolutionary period, would remain based on effort expended, but ultimately all would benefit from the wider distribution of social wealth “because the aim of the revolution is not the triumph of justice, morality, liberty and other bourgeois jokes, but as little work and as much intellectual and physical enjoyment as possible.”<sup>18</sup>

In an article either written for or reproduced by the Russian Marxist Emancipation of Labor group in Switzerland, Lafargue defined his view of the state and revolution: “To require the abolition of all forms of the state before classes themselves have been abolished is senseless. When the proletariat of Europe and America take possession of the state, it will have to organize a revolutionary authority and rule society dictatorially until the bourgeoisie has disappeared as a class, i.e., until the completion of the nationalization of the means of production.”<sup>19</sup> He tried to justify these imperious sentiments by dismissing democracy in capitalist society as a sham. Elected candidates, despite their promises, worked for those who had paid their costs. Two similar parties, as in Britain, alternated in power. The so-called Liberals acted the most cruelly against Ireland, and it was the Tories who passed factory acts. It had taken a revolution in France to secure reform, because French property owners resorted to dictators, such as Louis Napoleon and Thiers, for security.

Even so, optimism about the likelihood of revolution was tempered by the realization that the Possibilists, certainly in Paris, remained the strongest of the French socialist groups. Paul and Laura admitted it, and Engels acknowledged it.<sup>20</sup> The Parti Ouvrier was still but a sect. In 1882 it had drawn only a few dozen members, grew slowly during the decade, and may have reached a membership of two thousand in 1889. In the national legislative election of that September, the party won only 25,000 votes.<sup>21</sup> Even though the party’s executive committee (National Council) was located in Paris, and even though Guesde and Lafargue both lived in the city, the POF’s Agglomération Parisienne contained a minority of the city’s socialists. Paris was not a great industrial center, and contained more artisans than wage-earning workers. There was much factionalism, even in Marxist ranks: Deville, evolving as a political moderate, was threatening to leave the party (and did so in September 1889); conversely, a radical faction led

by Camescasse showed hostility to Guesdist direction. Lafargue, too, tired of incessant squabbling and spoke of departing.<sup>22</sup> But because of their faith in imminent revolution and their dogmatism, most Guesdists remained suspicious of reform and only tentatively shouldered the weapons made available by the Republic. Aside from Lafargue, they were to remain aloof in the battle over Boulanger.

In the spring of 1887, the last the couple was to reside within the city of Paris itself, the Committee of the Socialist Union of the Fifth Arrondissement, a left-bank constituency that included the Jardin des Plantes and its zoo, announced Lafargue's candidacy for the Paris Municipal Council. On April 26, an amused Engels, who believed that "to agitate one must keep oneself in the public eye," congratulated him as "the candidate of the plants and animals." Informed observers such as Vaughan predicted he would get only a handful of votes, perhaps two or three hundred, because the district was scarcely a revolutionary stronghold. And from the outset, the favorite, an "Opportunist" named Collin, attacked him for promoting revolutionary violence.<sup>23</sup>

Lafargue began to familiarize himself with local concerns: the leveling of a street, securing licenses for his constituents, addressing the problems of wine dealers in the area. He ran on a general socialist platform, and his flyers identified him as a doctor of medicine. Laura was entertained by a campaign in which her husband on one occasion came to blows with a heckler. Seated in the audience during one of Paul's speeches, she heard him referred to as a "windbag," "pubkeeper," "braggart," and "ranter." He was a far from effective speaker, and the comments of the police agent who heard him campaign six years earlier were doubtless still relevant: "He gets confused (*s'embrouiller*) and tires his listeners," particularly in his discussion of economic issues. But Laura also heard words of praise, which persuaded her that her husband was making progress. On one or two occasions, she told Engels, he had spoken "with rare fire and energy and with a naturalness and sincerity" that distinguished him from the "vile barnstormers who infest our platforms here."<sup>24</sup>

Collin easily won on the first ballot with 1,540 votes, Lafargue's 568 having placed him a distant third. Even though the Radical candidate threw his support to Lafargue on the runoff vote of an election that saw the victory of six Broussist candidates, Lafargue finished a poor second. Engels nevertheless found the result satisfactory; the exposure, he said, gave Paul a leg up for future elections.<sup>25</sup>

The Lafargues found the summer of 1887 "blazing hot" and, taking

two of Longuet's four children with them, spent most of August on the island of Jersey. They lodged with a farmer's family, making for "a real country holiday," in the most isolated part of the island. They planned to stay as long as funds lasted, but found expenses higher than expected and were asking Engels for help after only ten days. Indeed, the couple was becoming increasingly importunistic in their quest for money from him. When, on one occasion, he initially turned them down, Paul replied: "You gave us a fright with your, 'I haven't a penny!' How unpleasant that would be! Fortunately your lack of pences is translated into a check for twelve pounds . . ." <sup>26</sup>

They had long complained about their apartment on the boulevard Port Royal, particularly the noise and drafts. "Our rooms," Laura said, "are all doors and windows," and the bedroom was subject to "all the hot and cold winds that blow from the kitchen, which measures 3½ yards by 1½ and boasts of two doors and a window." <sup>27</sup> As always, the Lafargues preferred a house, with land enough for trees and a garden. Laura had never forgotten Modena Villas in Maitland Park, where the Marxes had lived from 1864 to 1875, a "veritable palace," according to her mother. Like her sisters, she always sought a good-size house with a garden and space enough for pets, and like Paul regretted having had to leave their home in Levallois in 1871. By the fall of 1886, they had had enough and were seeking a house to rent.

Still, it was not until January 1888 that the couple was installed in 60 avenue de la Champs-Élysées (today avenue Gabriel Peri), in the suburb of Le Perreux, a twenty-minute train ride east of Paris. The move, which took place in midwinter, was difficult, and Laura complained of mud and dirt and paint that would not dry. Initially disenchanted, she described the town as "the refuge of all the riff-raff of Paris, respectable thieves, swindlers and sharpers who made it a halting-place on their way to Mazas [prison]." Because they had no intention of socializing, however, she believed they would not be bothered by their neighbors.

Although their Paris friends were bewildered by their decision to leave the capital and even doubted their sanity, the Lafargues grew pleased with their house; they found it snug and comfortable, and they felt at home. Even in winter, Laura wrote, country life had its charms: "pretty river scenery," "some fine trees, including chestnuts, ashes, firs and poplars," with fruit trees and vines in the rear and enough ground for a well-stocked kitchen garden. She described her husband as happily going about "in great wooden clogs and ragged clothes . . .

hammering, sawing, planing, nailing, digging, and making himself generally and unusually useful." There was a poultry yard as well, containing "an intelligent cock with a modest harem." Two unused rooms could accommodate Engels and Helene Demuth, who were invited to visit.<sup>28</sup>

Spring brought even greater delights. Repeating her invitation, Laura said that she and Paul were "quixotic enough to take our country house for a castle," while the "pretty garden, which by moonlight and with a bit of goodwill, look[ed] like a bit of enchanted ground." Paul, she said, was a "perfect husbandman, up early and to bed late," and writing a great deal. To cover the costs of settling in, however, he was driven to ask for even greater amounts of money. Engels pleaded he had to help Percy Rosher, the husband of Lizzie Burns's niece Ellen ("Pumps"), for the couple, then living with Engels, was facing bankruptcy. That the Lafargues were hard pressed was clear: writing to Deville from Le Perreux, Paul used stationery he had picked up in London years ago.<sup>29</sup>

Her new surroundings mellowed Laura, now in her forties. In the spring of 1888, she was writing happily of Paris friends "trooping to our place" and of a "house full of people." They would be invited to lunch *en plein air* and given the precise train to take from Paris. She was especially grateful to Engels and thanked him beautifully not only for having made the house possible but for "the numberless acts of kindness you have showered on us during the last quarter century."<sup>30</sup> The Lafargues frequently had the Longuet children, in whom they took pleasure and showed interest, for extended visits.

Although he was to live in Le Perreux for seven years, Lafargue did not participate in local politics. Unlike efforts made in previous years, whether in Paris, Bordeaux, or Spain, he never recruited for the Workers Party—or, later, for the revived International. Laura's dissatisfaction with her neighbors may have accounted for this lack of involvement, or he may have found the range of opportunities too limited: the town then contained almost seven thousand residents and repeatedly reelected the same mayor. Still, local workers in the town established a branch (*chantier*) of the Knights of Labor (La Chevalerie du Travail Français), which Lafargue joined in 1896 but in which he played no active part. He only cited the suburb as an example of a municipality that provided good school canteens.<sup>31</sup>

While generally in good health, Paul's eyes bothered him to such an extent that by 1887 he had to have minor surgery performed on three occasions and was required to wear smoked eyeglasses. Finally, he

found a celebrated Polish oculist who correctly attributed the inflammation and cysts on the eyelid to a contraction of the tear duct. Once lanced, he was able to read and write without fatigue, and Paul recommended the oculist to Engels, who apparently suffered from a similar problem.<sup>32</sup>

Guesde had prevailed over Lafargue's objections to reviving *Le Socialiste*, and the newspaper reappeared on June 11, 1887, in a new format: in large folio form and with signed articles. But by the following February (1888), it had again ceased publication. "No paper, no party," the dismayed Engels exclaimed on learning the news.<sup>33</sup> Still, Lafargue's literary efforts were not limited to journalism or writing for learned reviews: he was also apparently trying to write plays, perhaps with Laura's help. Edward Aveling, the English physician and playwright who, under Engels's influence, had drawn closer to Marxism and who in 1884 began to live openly with Eleanor Marx, was asked either to translate or to adapt one of Lafargue's plays for English or American audiences. Aveling and Eleanor, already drawn to London's theatrical world, were caught up by the enthusiasm in intellectual circles generated by Ibsen, and Eleanor, who had taught herself Norwegian, was then translating *An Enemy of the People*.<sup>34</sup>

Desperately trying to become self-sufficient by his writing, Lafargue asked whether Aveling knew of an opening for a theater critic in the London press: he would provide "news of the theatre in Paris, descriptions of new plays, innovations, and so on," which would be "of interest for Paris is still the hub of the theatrical world." (Lafargue had earlier tried to help Eleanor when she was translating *Madame Bovary* into English.) Although publishing in *La Nouvelle Revue* and earning some money for his articles in *Die Neue Zeit* and for German translations of his pamphlets, the amounts received were insignificant. "I want to do my utmost to be as little of a burden to you as possible," he told Engels, although his eyes permitted him to work no more than six to eight hours a day (and it seems he also suffered from bouts of rheumatism).<sup>35</sup> But concern with personal aches and discomfort gave way to the enthusiasm inspired in Paris—and in Lafargue—by the dashing minister of war, General Boulanger, and to a profound disagreement with Engels over the appropriate socialist response.

In a letter to Engels in August 1886, Laura had commented that Boulanger, who earlier in the summer had won popular acclaim by announcing that recently enacted legislation prohibited members of for-

mer reigning families in France from serving in the army, was the coming “great man,” was “turning all heads and was bidding fair to be more than a nine days’ wonder.”<sup>36</sup> Boulanger had publicly called for the reconquest of Alsace and Lorraine, and was acclaimed for his concern over the well-being of his troops; and when the new minister removed royalist officers from garrisons quartered near Paris and expelled two dukes from the army, he became the hero of the Paris crowd. Nearly everyone felt pleased with the man on the black horse; he showed both charm and bravery. Parisians, music hall singers, and Radicals joined in praise of the “rare republican general.” An apparently successful encounter with Bismarck over the hasty incarceration of a French national and a series of popular orders, like the one allowing beards, added to his renown.

However, politically moderate deputies, disturbed by the growing adulation and resentful of Boulanger’s disdainful attitude toward the legislature, feared possible dictatorial aspirations and grouped in opposition. When a more conservative head of government “exiled” Boulanger to the XIIIth Army Corps in Clermont-Ferrand, Paul Déroulède, who headed the nationalistic League of Patriots and for whom Boulanger was “the only man who makes Germany afraid,” angrily compared the general’s dismissal with that of Necker in 1789. A huge and noisy demonstration at the Lyons railroad station, the scene of Boulanger’s departure, brought the general’s frenzied supporters to lie on the tracks to prevent his leaving and caused Lafargue to comment: “The Parisians have gone mad. It is impossible to imagine the enthusiasm for Boulanger, he is a god; his name is on everybody’s lips . . .” He added that if Boulanger had put himself at the head of the crowd and ordered a march to the Elysée, the president would be lucky only to find himself imprisoned.<sup>37</sup> The demonstration persuaded Boulanger’s Radical sponsors that he might well prove a threat to the Republic. Deserted by them, yet unwilling to vanish, Boulanger secretly responded to overtures from royalists, who saw in him the means to widen their base of support. They offered an organizational apparatus, a press, experience, and money. Not coincidentally, the general’s supporters, beginning in 1887, entered his name in a series of by-elections, even though as an active soldier he was ineligible, and in most cases he emerged as the clear winner. He pretended ignorance of what was done on his behalf, and resigned from his newly won seat after each victory.

Lafargue continued to show astonishment at Boulanger’s immense

popularity: "The Parisians are crazy," he repeated almost two weeks later. Still, he found no need to rally with other republicans in the cause of republican defense. Rather than viewing it as a threat to civil liberties, he initially saw the Boulangist movement as having been created by bourgeois governments to divert attention from socialism and avoid promised reforms. "The Opportunists speak of caesarism," he wrote in a newspaper article, "but is not the working class, *bel et bien*, under the regime of the sabre?"<sup>38</sup>

Taking a larger perspective, however, Engels saw Boulangism—or, more particularly, the chauvinism the movement inspired and encouraged—as increasing the likelihood of war between France, in alliance with Russia, and Germany. Such a war, he warned in a lengthy letter to Lafargue analyzing developments in eastern Europe, could lead either to revolution or to counterrevolution in France. In the event of a revolution that brought socialists to power, the reactionary Russian government would at once make peace with Bismarck and join him in an attack on revolutionary France. The more likely outcome of a Franco-German war, however, was a counterrevolution supported by the Russian ally making "good use" of the monarchist officers in the French army to work for "this restoration." A general war, moreover, would postpone revolution in Russia as well as in France and "violent[ly] check . . . the splendid development of our party in Germany." Consequently, Engels worried that while Possibilists and now Radicals opposed Boulanger, the Parti Ouvrier remained ambivalent, and that any support of *le brav général* by French Marxists would be taken by foreign socialists as a concession to nationalism and a break with proletarian internationalism.<sup>39</sup>

Boulanger had allegedly commented that "France needs war as the sole means of killing the socialist revolution." "If it is true," Engels warned Lafargue, "it is not he who will save the Republic." The perspicacious Engels, well before it became known, predicted that Boulanger "will come to an accommodation [with monarchists] if need be if it is a question between choosing between them and the socialists," and he advised Lafargue not to confuse chauvinistic Boulangism with a truly popular movement. Impressed, Lafargue published a revised version of Engels's analysis in the November 6, 1886, issue of *Le Socialiste*.<sup>40</sup>

Suitably chastened by Engels's fear of the "caesaristic ambitions of popular generals" and by his preferred reliance on an armed people as the only safeguard, Lafargue published a front-page article on Bou-



langer in the July 23, 1887, issue of *Le Socialiste*. In it he argued that “the danger of a coup d’état and of military despotism will only cease to exist when the permanent army will be abolished and the nation armed.” And police informers in the last months of the year commented on his opposition both to Boulanger and Ferry. At socialist-sponsored meetings, Lafargue accused the general of having done his duty vis-à-vis the Prussians only in a mediocre fashion; he had shown more bravery in repressing Communards and in shooting women and children.<sup>41</sup> (Actually, because of a wound, Boulanger had not played an active part in the wave of anti-Communard repression.) Still, Lafargue marveled at Boulanger’s mounting popularity and took pains to distinguish between the movement and the man.

His ability to do this in the pages of *Le Socialiste* was threatened by the likelihood that the newspaper would not survive, and together with Guesde and Duc-Quercy Lafargue went to Marseilles seeking ways to expand circulation. The newspaper, which continued to publish thanks to funds turned over by Deville from an inheritance, nevertheless folded again in early February 1888. The disappointed Engels told Lafargue that its disappearance “means your disappearance as a party from the Paris scene,” and he contrasted the Parti Ouvrier with the Possibilists, who managed to keep their newspaper alive. Not until September 1890 would *Le Socialiste* reappear, leaving Guesdists without a newspaper for two and a half years, a low point for the Parti Ouvrier.<sup>42</sup>

In another left-wing newspaper, Lafargue once more downplayed fears of Boulanger and now speculated about the movement’s usefulness for socialism. Boulanger “has not the stuff of a conspirator in him,” and socialist misgivings of the man were exaggerated. If circumstances were sufficiently extraordinary, anyone could play the general’s role. But because “he derives his strength solely from the poverty-stricken popular masses who are vaguely disillusioned by the Republic,” he told Engels, “he might unleash a revolution.” Paul could not fathom the mania: “The more he is attacked, the higher he rises in popular esteem.”<sup>43</sup>

At least one positive benefit, he went on, could accrue to socialists from the Boulanger craze: if the general continued to win by-elections, the frightened Chamber would reject the departmental-wide list voting adopted in 1885 and return to single-member constituencies. Since working-class votes could no longer be “diluted,” the change would benefit socialists, an analysis with which Engels agreed.<sup>44</sup> “In

the meantime,” an encouraged Lafargue responded, “he is useful to us; he rouses public opinion, which was apathetic . . . the Republic’s inability to bring about even the smallest reform has disheartened the working class and the population in general which, in desperation, has taken to Boulangermania.” Boulanger was “performing wonders,” because his electoral successes increased the likelihood of a Radical government. Lafargue admitted that “our people are very frightened of the General,” but remained convinced that he could prove “very useful” and “not have time to become really dangerous.”<sup>45</sup>

When on April 18 Boulanger was elected in the Dordogne and, with the multiple candidacies allowed in departmental-wide voting, also elected in the Nord, the Paris press speculated that a coup was imminent. Writing to Liebknecht, Lafargue called Boulanger’s victories “amazing” and added: “You attribute them to patriotic sentiment, the desire for revenge. I think you are entirely wrong . . . It is . . . disgust with parliamentarianism. Although I am not as Boulangist as you think, I have seen the elections with pleasure.” What struck Lafargue most was, on the one hand, the extent of Boulanger’s working-class support and, on the other, the nature of the opposition to him, much of it coming from “the rich and satisfied bourgeoisie and all its political leaders,” and the revolutionary possibilities this portended.<sup>46</sup>

Did Lafargue anticipate asking for socialist support for Boulanger? He did not say exactly that in his open letter published in the May 1 issue of Henri Rochefort’s pro-Boulangist *L’Intransigeant*, but he came close when he hinted to the editors that if published his remarks might prevent socialists from joining anti-Boulangist movements.<sup>47</sup> The letter defined Boulangism as a “national malaise,” which Radicals and Opportunists thought they could “conjure away with the help of anti-Boulangist agitation.” Lafargue attributed the “malaise” to parliament’s inability to provide promised reform. The chief opposition to Boulanger came from Radicals and Opportunists, who did not fear the general as much as the voters who supported him, for he symbolized popular discontent, and that was the issue, not dictatorship. And the Parti Ouvrier triumvirate itself held different and conflicting views: Deville wanted to work to save the Republic, which meant cooperating with Radicals in support of their new premier, Charles Floquet; Lafargue wanted to buttress Marxist opposition to the Radicals and Possibilists, who opposed Boulanger; while Guesde, whose wishes were to prevail, insisted on strict neutrality.<sup>48</sup>

Placing emphasis on areas of agreement but largely reflecting

Guesde's views, the party issued a statement to the press dated May 15, 1888. It blamed Boulangism on economic discontent within the capitalist Republic and on a lack of working-class reforms but urged "patriots" not to "entrap" themselves by supporting Boulanger; they should instead promote the cause of revolutionary socialism. Three days later, Guesde drafted and the Paris organization adopted a more categorical statement that incorporated some of Lafargue's concerns. In addition to denouncing Boulangism, this declaration specifically rejected Radical- and Opportunist-sponsored anti-Boulangism, while pressing workers to remain focused on revolutionary socialist propaganda.<sup>49</sup> It was clear, however, that Guesde had restated his refusal to intervene in "a bourgeois quarrel" between opposed bourgeois "clans." "One does not choose between cholera and the plague . . . One says no to the one and no to the other," he had said in explaining the party's abstention in a Nord by-election the previous month, and he asked voters to show their independence by casting ballots for the general's horse. Marxists, then, could only agree that other parties, whether supportive of or opposed to Boulanger, were bourgeois whose differences were consequently superficial.<sup>50</sup>

The three party chiefs continued to differ with regard to tactics. Unlike Deville and Guesde, Lafargue still found revolutionary possibilities in the movement. Returning home from the funeral of the Commune Emile Eudes on August 8, he described crowds clashing with police and compared the tumultuous scene with the demonstrations of 1789: "Everyone," he told Engels, "foresees the most serious happenings in the more-or-less near future." In December, anticipating Boulanger's victory in an important Paris by-election scheduled for the following month, he repeated flatly: "We are advancing towards a revolution, no one is in any doubt as to that."<sup>51</sup> Lafargue, then, was convinced that the Boulangist movement was genuinely popular and capable of taking a revolutionary socialist form if allowed to develop freely. Losing patience with him, Engels told Laura that her husband underestimated the capacity of the propertied classes to adapt to changed conditions and showed a lack of judgment in mistaking any expression of discontent as revolutionary élan and in blaming the belated outbreak of revolution on Possibilist and anarchist interference. Above all, the older man feared that unless checked, Boulanger's popularity would "drive the Czar into the arms of Bismarck" and that European war was "the very thing most to be feared."<sup>52</sup>

Recent scholarship has shown that Boulangism indeed won much of

its popular, if not financial, support from the left. A crisis of the liberal order, the widespread adulation of the general may have marked the first political expansion of a mass political movement: a struggle of Radical and Blanquist extremists against bourgeois society and liberal democracy, which together with several Guesdist sympathizers (notably Lafargue and the Bordeaux Parti Ouvrier chief Raymond Lavigne) aimed at destroying the centrist consensus. Even so, the movement's ties to royalism cannot be minimized.<sup>53</sup> Boulangism was a movement uniting all the opponents of the Republic, and Boulanger doubtless benefited from events more than he directed them: economic depression, political agitation for constitutional revision, and the reaction to German threats of war all helped create an environment favorable to the rise of a hero. Lafargue was therefore correct in linking economic crisis, though he did not provide a Marxist analysis of the depression but insisted only on an easy determinism, with the rise in Boulanger's popularity.

The May 1888 municipal elections strengthened Lafargue's conviction that socialists could benefit from the craze. In several towns, particularly in the Nord, he told Engels, Parti Ouvrier candidates had won. In Bordeaux, where unemployment was high, less sectarian Guesdists (perhaps because they were less isolated and placed emphasis on action rather than theory) and Boulangists had sealed an alliance, and the party there was preparing to participate openly in the following year's national election campaign.<sup>54</sup>

About two hundred Parti Ouvrier members were elected to municipal councils; they won in Lyons, Lille, and Roubaix, and did well in the Allier. Lafargue took particular pleasure in the disruption of Jules Joffrin's Possibilist stronghold in Montmartre by non-Broussist socialists and Boulangists, and predicted that socialists would soon elect a majority to the Chamber strong enough to blunt Boulangism. His optimism reached a new peak: "never [had he] felt so much confidence in the movement."<sup>55</sup> The delight shown in these successes, modest as they were, again revealed not only that he saw revolutionary potential in the mass support engendered by Boulanger but also that he feared the loss of a Marxist identity should his party cooperate with left-wing anti-Boulangists. Here he showed consistency: in the early 1880s, he had reversed an earlier stand (on municipal services) precisely to distance his party from the Possibilists.

Engels remained unconvinced. Able to write more freely to Laura, he repeatedly vented his frustration with her husband. Paul had said

that Boulangism was a popular movement but, because of Boulanger's personal inadequacies, not a dangerous one. If true, this was scarcely flattering to the French, who, Paul himself admitted, were both dabbling in parliamentarianism and seeking a savior. Engels saw the Boulangist movement as "Bonapartism," as "muddling philistine and *au fond* chauvinistic." Impelled by the widespread desire for revanche, it was "not really popular." The wish to recover Alsace accounted for Boulanger's strength, but even if achieved, reannexation would not resolve "all the history of the world." Above all, Engels feared war, either by Frenchmen or by Bismarck as a preventive measure. He wanted the French to break with Boulangism, first, because of its bellicose and Bonapartist tendencies and, second, because "if our people have only the ballot-box to rely on for the present . . . I do not see the advantage of having the voters' minds muddled by plebiscitary Boulangism."<sup>56</sup>

Neither Marx nor Engels, but especially Engels, ever fully appreciated the force of nationalism. In their view, an oppressed nationality was entitled to working-class support only when that nationality acted in a politically revolutionary way. In the early 1850s, Engels had found Poland less progressive "with its chivalrous and bearskin nature" than even Russia "with all its nastiness [and] Slavonic filth." (Admittedly these opinions were never made public and were intended for Marx's ears alone.) That the 1863 Polish uprising had produced strong anti-Polish feelings within the Russian peasantry—feelings that outweighed class solidarity—had surprised him. Later in the same decade Engels dismissed nationalism as a "Bonapartist invention." He described such "dying nationalities" as Bohemians, Carinthians, Dalmatians, and "historyless" Slavs as "ethnic trash [*volkerabfalle*]" whose aspirations toward nationhood would likely interfere with the socialist cause. Germany, on the other hand, at least insofar as her eastern neighbors were concerned, had a civilizing role to play.<sup>57</sup>

More accurately than Engels (who was distant from the scene and arguing by historical analogy), Lafargue understood the emotional appeal of Boulangism and the support it generated among workers, although his analysis was excessively political and unpersuasive.<sup>58</sup> Jacques Néré has shown the extent to which Boulangism's electoral successes in Paris came from working-class districts. And Lafargue rightly saw the danger of war as exaggerated: neither Boulanger nor most Frenchmen wanted it. Still, the tactic Lafargue was urging the Workers Party to follow was a dangerous one for uninformed militants.

Lafargue continued to meet with his friend Vaughan and other Boulangists but also tried to allay Engels's fears. Because the general's influence extended only to enlisted men and not to officers, Boulanger posed no threat. His deficiencies of character provided every assurance that he would fall from prominence when no longer useful to those who supported him, and to attack his person now would only increase his popularity. Better to point out his poor attendance record in the Chamber (earlier he had been forced to hand over his commission) and his inability to work for the reforms promised. With no armed forces under his command and no tradition in France of pronunciamientos, he was only "a vulgar libertine." Most importantly, his Possibilist opponents were showing themselves as schemers and place seekers.<sup>59</sup>

As Laura pointed out, her husband's reluctance to combat Boulangists and the chauvinism they invoked was not typical of the socialist movement. In contrast to Broussists, his party never won widespread working-class support in Paris, where national feeling ran strong. Paul was howled down when he spoke of internationalism, and Engels, who placed greatest emphasis on the thriving German socialist movement, did not want German socialists to attend an international congress then proposed by Marxists to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the French Revolution, certainly not when the organizers of that congress were flirting with "a bourgeois party" and embracing nationalism. He wanted assurance from the Parti Ouvrier that the Boulangists would be treated as class enemies.<sup>60</sup>

The debate over Boulangism highlighted the divergence of views between Lafargue and Guesde. Lafargue believed there was no real danger of a Boulangist dictatorship and that the general's followers could conceivably be won over to socialism. Guesde, on the other hand, although he had guardedly agreed that Boulangism possessed revolutionary potential and had admitted to admiring Boulanger's ability to work consternation among bourgeois politicians, preferred to have the party remain aloof from all bourgeois factions. The differences among nonrevolutionary parties were superficial, he insisted, and to focus on them only divided working people and fragmented their strength. Accordingly, he urged that the Parti Ouvrier oppose both sides in what amounted to a family quarrel.<sup>61</sup>

The POF's refusal to denounce Boulangism (which meant allying with other critical groups) doubtless issued from the determination to pursue independent revolutionary action—clearly Lafargue's major

concern—and the schematic view of the state and parliamentarianism, which persuaded Guesdists that government could do no more than reflect the interests of the ruling bourgeois class. Engels, on his part, wanted the party to remain committed to popular revolution, but criticized it for failing to attack Boulangism and for the chauvinism French Marxists occasionally displayed. Socialists were supposed to be internationalist, however difficult this was in France after the defeat of 1871 and the popular desire for revenge.<sup>62</sup> Lafargue's proposal to get "some of our people into the Chamber by putting them on Boulangist lists" was for Engels "far worse than not getting them into the Chamber at all." Only his respect for Engels induced Lafargue to moderate his support for Boulanger. Indeed, his admiration for the older man, which bordered on veneration, had only grown over the years. "Engels is a remarkable man," he told Danielson, the Russian translator of *Capital*, at the end of 1889. "I have never known a head as young and as alert, and of such encyclopedic knowledge." Engels, too, regretted their differences, and told Laura: "All I insisted on from the beginning, and all Paul declined to let me have, was a clear and unmistakable assurance that the Boulangists should be treated as bourgeois enemies . . ."<sup>63</sup>

The crisis intensified when Boulanger was reelected in the Nord on August 19 and elected as well in the Somme and Charente-Inférieure. It came—and passed—on January 27, 1889, in Paris, where he won an 80,000-vote majority against the candidate of the combined republican opposition. Paris had gone nationalist: Boulanger was acclaimed on the boulevards, and a coup seemed imminent. Longuet, now in the left wing of the Radical party, had joined with Clemenceau and other republicans in giving full support to Boulanger's republican opponent. Lafargue had supported the socialist candidate, an unknown stonemason who finished a distant third. But in a manner reminiscent of twentieth-century dictators, Boulanger preferred to win power legally and refused to stage the coup his supporters were urging.

Seeing in Boulanger's victory "a distinct revival of the Bonapartist element in the Parisian character," the disgusted Engels anticipated an eventual takeover and then war—unless Boulanger made some "egregious blunder"—and he urged Paul to "brace" himself for the struggle and to stop despairing that "there's no going against the current. Nobody asks of him to stop the current, but if we are not going to go *against* the popular current of momentary tomfoolery, what in the name of the devil is our business?"<sup>64</sup>

However, there was no need for any distinctly socialist action, which, in view of their limited numbers, would not have made much difference. The staggered republicans began to pull themselves together. The Tirard government dissolved the Boulangist League of Patriots. The Chamber debated, and in the next few months proposed, the return to single-member constituencies and the abolition of multiple candidacies to avoid any future plebiscite-type decisions. On shaky legal grounds, it charged Boulanger with violating national security, and to the astonishment of his supporters the general fled to Brussels rather than face (an unlikely) trial. He was condemned in absentia and two years later committed suicide on the grave of the mistress he said he had left France to join. By 1890 the flirtation of some Marxists with Boulangism was over.

Lafargue was later to reject charges that he had defended Boulangism. In truth, he was never a committed Boulangist: Engels's pressure had prevented that. Still, in contrast to Brousse, he had refused to oppose the general, "not because we were Boulangists, but because we did not want to be confused with the Caddettists [Radicals] and because this war of insults and idiotic attacks served only to inflate Boulanger's astonishing popularity." And he remained convinced that had Boulanger not fled, or had he returned before the 1889 elections, "he would be master of the situation today . . . What ditched him was his lack of determination and energy and not the abuse of the anti-Boulangists."<sup>65</sup>

At the POF's Lille Congress in October 1890, party leaders agreed that Boulangism arose as a variant of bourgeois politics, and they condemned the socialists (chiefly Blanquists) who had joined him.<sup>66</sup> Such condemnation, however, had been difficult at the height of Boulanger's popularity, because Marxists were then making their first bid for an effective political role and were recruiting in the ranks of labor, where Boulanger was popular. Parti Ouvrier weakness was all too apparent. Even in the Nord election in April 1888, where the party found its greatest support, neither of its two candidates got more than 6,500 votes. Boulanger was elected with over 130,000 votes, and his chief republican opponent received close to 100,000. For long periods of time, the party lacked a newspaper. The decentralized structure decided on at Roanne and the holding of only a single national congress in the eight years between 1882 and 1890 (Roubaix in 1884) meant that leadership emanated from the Guesde-Deville-Lafargue triumvirate. But the three party chiefs corresponded infrequently with



party members in the rest of the country, and the regional federations were foundering. Lafargue admitted in May 1888 that the Workers Party “survived only in a chaotic state” and that Laura’s opinion that “it is something even to be able to say that Frenchmen no longer resent an appeal to organize” appeared entirely justified.<sup>67</sup> The neutrality observed in the Boulanger episode amounted to a renunciation of any leadership role in a mass movement, but domestic strategy was not to change until the next decade. Until then, the party focused primarily on international action, most notably Lafargue’s and the French Marxists’ move to re-create the International Workingmen’s Association.

## 5 That Damned Congress

Lafargue's wish to have the Workers Party make use of Boulangism upset Engels not only because he thought Lafargue was wrong to covet nationalism but also because the sympathy shown by elements of the French left for *revanchisme* had so alarmed German socialists. The SPD leadership was now rethinking an earlier decision (it had tabled) to support an international socialist congress with the aim of launching a revived International Workingmen's Association. The IWMA, dead for all practical purposes in the wake of The Hague Congress's decision to transfer its headquarters to the United States, had formally been dissolved at the Philadelphia Congress in 1876.<sup>1</sup>

Many of the newly formed socialist parties looked with favor on projects designed to reestablish the International, but all such projects had failed. During the past decade, socialists in small countries such as Belgium and Switzerland, avid defenders of the old IWMA, especially wanted to reconstitute it, driven perhaps by a deep "nostalgia," as the skeptical Engels put it.<sup>2</sup> Both Engels and the German Social Democrats had blamed mutual distrust and lack of organization for the collapse of the International and were hesitant to try again. Instead they placed their hopes on the outbreak of revolution in Germany, where the persecution of socialists was underway, or in Russia, where the tsar had been assassinated by nihilists in 1881. In any event, they believed it was necessary to await solidly based national movements and, in view of the importance attached to the fast-growing German party, an end to that country's antisocialist legislation.

The Germans, and particularly Liebknecht, in October 1887 had nevertheless voted at their Saint-Gallen Congress (held in Switzerland because Bismarck's antisocialist laws forbade party meetings in Germany) to plan for a world congress of socialists. During a visit to Paris in July 1886, Liebknecht had spoken to Lafargue and other French Marxists about an international gathering.<sup>3</sup> Lafargue pointed to the limited numbers and lack of enthusiasm of French socialists (by which

he meant Guesdists) and suggested postponement until 1889, the year of the planned Paris Exposition. The Parti Ouvrier would then have more members and so be more of a match for Brousse and his followers. As he had repeatedly told Engels, Lafargue anticipated that the Boulangist campaign would erode the popularity of the Radicals and increase the likelihood of a return to single-member constituencies, both of which outcomes would improve the socialists' electoral chances.<sup>4</sup> But when Vaillant, too, expressed interest in an international congress, Lafargue showed more enthusiasm: "We can stir up Paris and the whole of France and give the congress real importance." Preliminary talks led to an understanding to place labor conditions, particularly popular demands for the eight-hour workday and a minimum salary, on the agenda.<sup>5</sup>

Broussists also anticipated holding a congress at the time of the centennial, and it was natural for them to seek the support of labor leaders abroad, particularly British trade unionists, who had shown long-standing interest in improving working conditions. In 1887 the British Trades Union Congress (TUC) joined the call for an international conference to promote the eight-hour working day. The next year its parliamentary committee sponsored a London meeting attended by a number of foreign delegates, including Brousse, and this conference charged the Federation of Socialist Workers of France (the Possibilists) with organizing an international Paris congress in 1889.<sup>6</sup> Thus both German and French Marxists, on the one hand, and French Possibilists and British trade unionists, on the other, almost simultaneously and independently made plans for an international congress.

The differences between them soon became clear. Guesdists, who got a sympathetic hearing in Germany, wanted a more politically oriented congress, while the British wanted specific economic and trade union concerns discussed, a view shared by the Possibilists in France. Each side, then, while moving toward an 1889 congress, envisaged a different kind of congress.

Nervous about violating the antisocialist laws and anxious to make a proposed congress as wide-sweeping as possible, the German socialists dropped their own plans for holding one and began to negotiate with British trade unionists. These talks broke down because the Germans understandably wanted to include representatives of Marxist parties while the British insisted on having only trade union delegates. To avoid the spectacle of two rival congresses, Liebknecht proposed a preliminary congress at The Hague in February 1889 to dis-

cuss an agenda and to establish a joint organizing committee. The Possibilists refused to attend, charging that the meeting was not representative and that only they had the right to organize a congress, a right given them by the London trade union meeting. They went ahead with preparations for their own congress. Guesdists and the Blanquist faction led by Vaillant, in turn, rejected the Possibilist decision and designated Lafargue and Deville as their representatives. Aiming at a compromise, Swiss and Belgian delegates at The Hague got a majority to agree to have the Possibilists summon the congress, which would open in September, and let its members decide who should be admitted. This too was rejected by the Possibilists, who saw it as an attempt "to flood the congress with Marxists."<sup>7</sup>

In two meetings, held at Bordeaux and Troyes in November and December 1888, Guesdists resolved to organize their own congress. Whether it would be successful would depend on the response of the powerful German Social Democratic Party. Together with other Marxists, Lafargue tried to get unanimous ratification of their decision to make the drive for the eight-hour workday the theme of the international congress. To those who protested that this put excessive emphasis on a syndicalist agenda, Lafargue replied that both the eight-hour workday and the principle of a minimum wage amounted to relatively modest demands.<sup>8</sup>

In a manner identical to his attack in 1880–1882 on Brousse's municipal socialism as an abandonment of collectivism, and convinced as ever of the need for Marxists to maintain a distinct political identity, Lafargue would have no part of any proposed Possibilist role. He insisted they lacked real influence in French socialism: only the Parti Ouvrier and Vaillant's Blanquists spoke for it, and only they should organize and direct the trade union movement. Consequently, he could not accept Possibilist overtures to the SPD nor could he understand the latter's willingness to respond to them. Inasmuch as only "government subsidies" permitted Brousse and his followers to remain a force and so prevent socialist unity, they constituted "the party of traitors" and were now "paying court to Liebknecht, whom they butter up in their newspapers." Neither he nor Laura could understand the German Social Democrats' willingness to tolerate Brousse. Should the Germans attend a Possibilist-sponsored congress, Lafargue told Engels, "they would be ruined in the eyes of French socialism and do us great harm."<sup>9</sup>

For Engels, it was not the German socialists' view of Possibilism but

their concern about the Guesdists' willingness to tolerate Boulanger and his followers that made them receptive to Brousse's overtures. Nevertheless, he formally asked his German socialist friends to attend the "Guesde-Lafargue congress," as he put it, and to ignore the "Malon-Brousse congress." Still, he privately told Laura, "under no circumstances could I encourage our German friends to attend a congress the convokers of which had so far forgotten the old traditional policy of the proletariat as to coquette with a bourgeois party, and a party such as the Boulangists at that."<sup>10</sup> The pessimistic Engels nevertheless remained convinced not only that Boulangists would win subsequent elections but that there would be two international socialist congresses in Paris—one sponsored by Marxists, the other by Possibilists—and that the Germans would probably attend neither.<sup>11</sup>

Yet when in March 1889 the Possibilists issued a public invitation to an international socialist congress scheduled for July, the German Marxists rejected it out of hand. Because Engels had insisted that if an international congress was to be held it must be under POF auspices, Bernstein had reversed himself and published an attack on Brousse and his party. He called them government agents whose congress, unlike that sponsored by the Guesdists, would be given free rein by the police, and he denied that the German party favored the Possibilist-British trade union alliance. The Guesdist congress, Engels wrote to his friend Sorge, would show the differences between the "real movement and swindlers." The Parti Ouvrier subsequently redoubled efforts to organize its own congress, and in May Laura translated into German and English the Guesdists' "appeal to workers and socialists of Europe and America," inviting them to send delegates.<sup>12</sup>

The Engels-Lafargue correspondence from the end of 1888 until July 1889 is dominated by the question of the congresses. Engels was to spend three months pleading with socialists on the continent to attend the one planned by the French Marxists, and his ability to persuade the SPD leaders assured its success. Still, Engels and Lafargue wrangled over the opening date, a possible role for the Possibilists, who was to be invited, the organization of the congress, and Lafargue's resentment at having first been snubbed by the Germans.<sup>13</sup> When Lafargue proposed changing the date to have the Marxist congress coincide with that of the Possibilists to publicize the contrast between the two, and so antagonize the Germans—who favored the September opening decided on at The Hague—the usually placid Engels was upset enough to ask him to "be reasonable; carry out loyally what has

been passed, do not make it impossible for your best friends to support you, *give and take* . . .” And four days later he wrote: “You play the spoilt child, you haggle, you ask for more, and when at last they succeed in making you accept what is agreed by everyone, you try to impose additional terms, endangering everything that has been gained for you . . .”<sup>14</sup>

None of this persuaded Lafargue, and finally he won over Engels—and diplomatically credited him with having saved the congress.<sup>15</sup> Engels thereupon persuaded the Germans to accept the July 14 date. He urged Lafargue to draft and circulate an announcement in different languages spelling out the terms for participation. Skeptical from the outset about convoking an international congress and resentful of the demands placed on his time, Engels nevertheless worked feverishly to ensure its success, even drawing up a mailing list. “That damned congress and everything connected with it has robbed me of all my time in the past three months,” he wrote on May 21, calling it all “a hellish grind.”<sup>16</sup>

The episode left Paul with some contempt for Bebel, Liebknecht, and the German socialists, whom he criticized for having “feared the Possibilists: they [the German socialiste] do not want to come out openly against them and they still hope to win them over and unite with them by holding the two congresses together. They are deceiving themselves, they don’t know Brousse and Co.” He accused the Germans of “dictat[ing] to us” and resolved to have the Parti Ouvrier regain its freedom of action.<sup>17</sup>

Caught in the middle, the unfortunate Engels was unhappy with both sides. He acknowledged that much of the delay was also due to Liebknecht, “who considers himself . . . as the center of the International movement,” and showing “a mania for unity,” was still trying to reconcile Marxists and Possibilists. Even so, he told Lafargue, other European socialists did not agree that the Possibilists were not socialists: they were a power in Paris, where they had won the support of many workers, and could not be ignored. Yet because he expected Boulangism to triumph, Engels regarded the entire debate as academic. Disgusted, he preferred to return to work on volume three of *Capital*, set aside for three months, and to console himself if “the congress does not end in smoke.”<sup>18</sup>

Engels’s resentment was real, for after a lengthy delay he refused Laura’s invitation to stay with the Lafargues during the congress. He preferred, he said, not to attend, arguing that he avoided such “neces-

sary evils” as “world fairs” and congresses “on principle” and pleading work on *Capital*. Still, Engels accepted Lafargue’s view of Brousse as “a latter-day Bakunin seeking to disrupt the French movement.” He also accepted Brousse’s view that the conflict had conjured up “the old split in the International over again.” And insofar as Brousse still retained his long-standing fear of Marxist dictatorship over a socialist international, this was perfectly true. However, Eleanor, who would act as an interpreter for the English, Germans, and French, and Aveling arrived on July 6 and stayed in Le Perreux, near the Lafargues.<sup>19</sup>

Thus at the Paris Exposition of 1889, not only the Eiffel Tower but two rival socialist congresses opened the same week and only a mile apart. Doubtless reflecting the frustration encountered in these preliminaries as well as revealing his esthetic proclivities, Lafargue found the tower “hideous.” The organizers of the Exposition, he said, were “only thinking of the pleasures they can offer visitors [and] the most certain result of the Exhibition will be the propagation of syphilis.”<sup>20</sup> The meeting organized by the Marxists in the Salle Pétrelle (on the street of the same name) had fewer delegates, a total of 391 (compared to more than 600 at the rival congress), but they came from nineteen or twenty countries, from Europe and the Western Hemisphere, and included the leading personalities, such as Bebel, Liebknecht, Bernstein, Plekhanov, Adler, Zetkin, Niewenhuis, de Paepe, Hardie, Eleanor Marx, and Aveling. Of the two congresses, the Marxist meeting was the more important. The Possibilist and trade unionist congress on the rue de Lancry was dominated by the more than five hundred French Possibilists, English trade unionists who allied with Henry Hyndman’s Social Democratic Federation (SDF), and a Belgian contingent.<sup>21</sup>

Neither congress received much attention in the nonsocialist press, an omission that may be explained in part by the presence of no fewer than sixty-nine international congresses then underway in Paris. In opening remarks to the Possibilist congress, particularly to its foreign delegates, Broussists declared they had done their utmost to achieve union; and an orderly and detailed discussion of proposed labor legislation then got underway. Though plans were made for an 1891 congress, the Possibilists were already losing delegates to the Marxists: only fifty-eight people, reported a pleased Lafargue, had attended the last session of their congress. Inasmuch as the next international socialist gathering was indeed held under Marxist auspices and attended by many delegates, including Hyndman, the Salle Pétrelle assembly

could claim legitimate title as the founding congress of the Second International.<sup>22</sup>

The Salle Pétrelle was draped for the occasion with red cloth and red flags, and banners glorified the June Days of 1848 and the Paris Commune, as well as the France of Babeuf, Blanqui, and Varlin. Over the rostrum, in gold letters, shone the closing words of the *Communist Manifesto*: “Workers of All Countries, Unite.” Although the delegates debated uniting the congresses, a majority believed that Broussists and Marxists were too far apart and that the former were in reality bourgeois politicians. Rumors spread that “wicked Possibilists” lay in wait at the railway stations to lead unsuspecting delegates from the provinces off to the wrong hall. Although a self-proclaimed Marxist, Hyndman attended the Possibilist congress because he was not invited to the other and because his rivals, William Morris and Eleanor Marx, were. Indeed, Eleanor believed that her brother-in-law had erred grievously in inviting only the British Socialist League and not the more representative, if less palatable, SDF.<sup>23</sup>

Much of the organizational procedure was handled by Lafargue in his capacity as the Parti Ouvrier secretary for “external affairs.” Liebknecht was appalled to learn that he had failed to provide lodgings for the hot and tired Germans on their arrival, and the aging German leader had to chase all over Paris finding rooms. Preferring that newspapers report people being turned away, Lafargue rented a small hall rather than a large one that might remain half-empty. Should attendance prove greater than expected, he would move the congress to a larger assembly hall. He would also keep working sessions closed to the public and not concern himself with any adverse press reaction.<sup>24</sup>

Engels disagreed with this last decision. Although appropriate for most associations, closed sessions for “a congress of workers and socialist delegates, called to discuss such general questions as the eight hour day, legislation on women’s and children’s labor, the abolition of standing armies . . . strikes me as quite unjustifiable.” Open meetings, moreover, would generate needed publicity. The congress was called to benefit the “whole world,” and the “absence or presence of a few Parisians” did not matter. He accused Paul of really fearing that the Broussists would draw a larger audience and the adverse publicity this would have. Moreover, and perhaps most important to Engels, was the German socialists’ opposition to closed meetings: they could not afford to lay themselves open to charges of having joined a secret



society. The hall indeed proved too small, but the Salle des Fantaisies Parisiennes on the nearby rue Rochechouart was available, and the congress moved there the second day.<sup>25</sup>

Lafargue opened the proceedings with an internationalist-sounding speech in which he particularly welcomed the German socialists. (Already occupied with the campaign he planned to wage for the fall legislative elections, Guesde made only a brief appearance.) He praised the delegates for having rallied around not their national flags but the red flag of the international proletariat and reminded them that they were “all brothers and have only a single enemy: private capital, whether it be Prussian, English, French or Chinese.” Vaillant, however, was perhaps the leading French figure, although Liebknecht, by virtue of his experience, linguistic ability, and dedication, was seen as the moving spirit of the congress. He and Vaillant were elected joint presidents, and their handshake, taken as symbolizing the unity of the French and German proletariat, evoked much applause. Both men promised to work for peace and denounced the militarism of bellicose capitalist governments.<sup>26</sup>

Condemning the Possibilists as paid by Radical and Opportunist ministers to compete in elections and so keep socialists divided, Lafargue, like Engels, continued to fear that Liebknecht was hatching a plot to fuse the two congresses.<sup>27</sup> At the fourth session, Liebknecht did indeed propose that the two congresses meet together, and his resolution won support from moderates in the hall. But both Possibilist and Guesdist demands for the examination of the credentials of every candidate (to mutually exclude as much of the opposition as possible) made the question moot, especially for the Germans, for whom the antisocialist laws made registration dangerous. Thus neither side would make concessions in the matter of validating credentials and so make a merger possible, but the pressure to merge—and the outbreak of anarchist-inspired disturbances—left Lafargue and the French Marxists infuriated.<sup>28</sup>

He relished the failure to bring the two congresses together, having anticipated complete disunity had “this nightmare” taken place. Tired of greeting confused delegates and finding accommodations for them, Laura, like Engels, looked forward to the conclusion of this “memorable international business.” Organizational procedures were rudimentary: there were no adequate arrangements for recording the debates, and ad hoc interpreters such as Liebknecht, Lafargue, and Eleanor

were criticized for excessively free translations. Two days were required to ratify credentials and approve voting procedures, and the next three to hear reports from the socialists of each country represented, even those of some relatively insignificant groups.<sup>29</sup>

After an effort to speed things up, the congress finally turned to labor legislation (the very legitimacy of which was denied by the few anarchists present, on the grounds that only governments could enact such legislation). At the end of the last afternoon, resolutions that proved vital to both the International and its member parties were hurriedly passed, beginning with the maximum eight-hour working day proposed by the Bordeaux Marxist, Raymond Lavigne. And since labor improvements, it was clear, could in fact emanate only from existing governments, the congress had in fact committed itself to reform within the present state framework, as anarchist critics quickly noted. Subsequent resolutions condemned standing armies and proposed the substitution of citizen militias for them; other resolutions insisted on the need of socialists to work for suffrage where it did not exist and to use May Day as a symbol of working-class solidarity, an idea and day approved the previous December by the American Federation of Labor. The Russian delegates abstained on the latter resolution (such demonstrations were clearly out of the question in tsarist Russia), and the cautious Germans added the qualification that the nature of the demonstration must be governed by the conditions existing in each country. (They ultimately decided on evening gatherings and proposed postponing daytime celebrations to the first Sunday of the month, a move supported by the British trade unionists, to avoid problems with the authorities.)

These actions corresponded with the view of an international labor organization held by Lafargue at the time of the Bakuninist-Marxist conflict in Spain. In 1871 he had accused the Spanish Bakuninist Morago of wanting the International to be nothing more than a body that works out ideas and theories but “never stoops to practice.”<sup>30</sup> Lafargue had preferred to make the International an agency of revolutionary action, providing the necessary and inclusive leadership for revolutionary movements in various countries, and not merely a clearinghouse for information.

At a subsequent meeting of its own, the Parti Ouvrier reorganized itself by creating a provisional executive committee, the National Council, to be located in Paris. Seven members were elected, including

Lafargue, Guesde, and Deville. Future councils were to be elected annually by a party congress, the first of which was scheduled for Lille the following October.

On May 1, 1890, approximately 100,000 workers and supporters staged a peaceful demonstration in the Place de la Concorde in Paris, but less support was shown in the provinces. In *Die Neue Zeit*, Lafargue admitted that only the “most advanced workers” had observed the day, and he later recalled that the minister of interior, Ernest Constans, tried to frighten away those who planned to participate. Still, the demonstration was “most imposing” and “took greater proportions than socialists dared hope.” The day, for one enthusiastic British commentator, would become one of the “most important dates of the century.”<sup>31</sup>

Three days later, on May 4 (the first Sunday of the month), Lafargue spoke as the representative of French labor at a gigantic Hyde Park demonstration to a crowd estimated at between 250,000 and 300,000. “As far as the eye could reach,” Engels told Bebel, “there was an ocean of heads . . . more than three quarters . . . were demonstrating workers,” and he wished that Marx could have been there to see it.<sup>32</sup> Engels had urged Lafargue to stress the international nature of the demonstration in his remarks and quench remaining fears of chauvinism. Apparently he did. “Paul spoke very well,” Engels told Laura, “and in remarkably grammatical English too . . . and was received best of all and got a more enthusiastic cheer at the end than anyone else.” Engels only regretted another speaker’s reference to the “dream” of the general strike, which he dismissed as an anarchist “nonsense.” Afterward, both in a letter to Guesde and in a later recollection, Lafargue described how happy that day had left him, a day when workers were made aware of their struggle and when the wealthier districts of London “closed down” and their inhabitants left the city. He had “never seen” such a meeting. “Imagine an area twice as large as the Champs de Mars, covered with people . . . The enthusiasm was indescribable and the order magnificent.”<sup>33</sup> Even so, he could not have imagined that the following year’s May Day celebration would result in both his imprisonment and election to parliament.

In December 1888, a story had appeared in the Possibilist press accusing the Marxists of trying to make use of Boulangism to get their party leaders elected, and it charged Lafargue with masterminding the scheme.<sup>34</sup> But if such was the plan, it failed: socialists (of all persua-

sions) and Boulangists both performed poorly in the national legislative elections of September 22–October 6, 1889. After considering and (in the face of opposition from a Boulangist and a more moderate socialist) rejecting candidacies in Paris and in the Herault Department, Lafargue, with Vaillant's help, won the support of socialists in the Saint-Armand constituency of the Cher Department.

Deville, too, had considered running but had declined. He was slowly separating himself from his Marxist colleagues. Having become more moderate in his politics, he had grown disillusioned with Guesdist tactics, especially the continual harping on cataclysmic revolution as the solution to society's ills, and during the last two years had several times threatened to leave the party. On September 18, 1889, he quietly resigned from its National Council. Their political differences notwithstanding, Deville and Lafargue remained on good terms: in the Deville papers there are fifty-two letters and cards from Lafargue, many extending invitations to Deville and his wife well into the new century.<sup>35</sup>

Vaillant had initially proposed Guesde, who refused, preferring to focus on his own Marseilles campaign, and then offered his support to Lafargue, who found the offer attractive.<sup>36</sup> A local electoral committee sponsored a monarchist, a decision that Lafargue believed might advance his own candidacy. He arrived "on the field of my electoral battle" two days later, on September 9, was unimpressed by what he found, and must have wondered about the viability of a Marxist candidate in such a district. "So far as I can judge," he wrote Laura that evening, "it is not very favorable; the people with whom I have dealings, though they call themselves Socialists, don't know the first thing about Socialism, and these are the great minds in the area. But they are a decent people who want to get rid of the Radical deputy—an incompetent—who has become an opportunist. They are all small artisans; blacksmiths, plasterers, mechanics, clog-makers, carpenters, etc. . . . I find myself transported into a pre-1848 world."<sup>37</sup>

His supporters had anticipated that Paul would cover campaign costs, estimated at between 1,200 and 1,500 francs. Finally, a local benefactor, who expected a refund in the event of victory, agreed to finance him. Lafargue believed that many of the townspeople might vote socialist, but worried about the countryside. Three days later he sounded more optimistic: the farmers had "a vague and undefined hope that socialism would bring reforms beneficial to their position."

They detested the governing Opportunists and their overseas adventures (in Indochina). Hence, he confided to Engels, "all in all, it is a good constituency," and he believed that he had a chance to win.<sup>38</sup>

He felt even more optimistic after his first few speeches. On the day of his arrival, Lafargue told five hundred people in Saint-Armand that although not for Boulanger he was for Boulangism, that is, he identified with the protest that brought the movement its popular support. The incumbent, Pajot, was invited to debate but refused on the grounds that "republicans do not compete." Paul gave three other speeches in neighboring villages, in halls so filled that "people st[ood] in the streets, windows, and doorways." After criticizing the Opportunists and Radicals who had "brought Boulangism into existence," he spoke of "agrarian socialism," which would bring an end to the concentration of ownership and provide government aid to victims of the phylloxera crisis. The response so cheered him that he estimated if given six more weeks to visit every village, he could win over the suspicious farmers.<sup>39</sup>

Lafargue's campaign posters denounced Opportunism as "the common enemy" and described him as "the sole republican candidate . . . the friend of the poor and defender of the oppressed . . . against Ferry and Boulanger." His thoroughly moderate program was based on constitutional revision: abolition of the upper house and the presidency of the Republic, abolition of the religious budget, and rearmament of the people. Specific social demands included scientific education and social insurance. The only collectivist-sounding plank was that asking for a return to the nation of "alienated public property," accepted as meaning mines. Noteworthy was the considerably more Marxist stand taken by the socialist candidate running in Saint-Armand's second constituency.<sup>40</sup>

It was a three-way race. In addition to Pajot, Paul faced the Comte de Mortemart, whom he described as "an old aristocrat" and as an "out and out Legitimist." Should the Legitimist withdraw to prevent the election of the Radical, Paul figured he had a chance: people, he said, would then vote socialist.<sup>41</sup> However, Lafargue was put on the defensive by a Pajot flyer that referred to the Blanquist origins of his campaign (many Blanquists were committed to Boulangism) and to Lafargue as "a poor innocent" manipulated by Vierzon (a Blanquist stronghold in the department). The prefect labeled him a "socialist Boulangist" who was becoming "clearly Boulangist." In his own flyer, Lafargue rejected these charges: he would place hope for political and

social reform “not in a man but in the people, and in the principles of scientific socialism.”<sup>42</sup> And in a subsequent report, the prefect acknowledged that Lafargue identified himself as a republican socialist.

To further prevent himself from being defined by his opponents, Lafargue denied that Boulangism was an issue in the Cher: it was an understandable reaction on the part of disillusioned voters who did not want to hear of socialism or radicalism. Yet he had tried to win over Boulanger’s supporters: as reported by the police, not only had he denounced the consequences of capitalism in a rural milieu but he had accepted the support of Boulangist chiefs who campaigned on his behalf. And the incumbent was easily reelected on the first ballot (September 22); Lafargue, a poor third, trailed the Legitimist with only six percent of the registered voters.<sup>43</sup>

In his own analysis, Lafargue maintained that “everything was against me: I was unknown in the constituency, which gave reign to every sort of calumny; and in order to split the Republican vote the rumor was spread that I was in Mortemart’s pay.” Moreover, pressure was put on civil servants, particularly teachers, to support the official candidate. Lafargue neglected to mention that he had sought electoral success in the absence of a solidly based organization and that his poor showing would not encourage such organization afterward.<sup>44</sup>

Still, Lafargue had enjoyed the campaign. He later described how he had traveled extensively through the department. “I visited villages lost in the woods, distant by several hours from the nearest station. In many there had never been a public meeting. The only political speaker heard by the inhabitants had been the priest, speaking from high on his shrine. That’s why they usually called me ‘the preacher.’” He was often accompanied by the peasant mayor of the village to meeting rooms that were filled to overflowing. “I never spoke to a more attentive public.”<sup>45</sup>

In Marseilles, Guesde reached the second ballot but was then defeated, despite an infusion of German socialist money. The Blanquist candidate and former Communeard, Eugène Protot, had refused to yield in his favor, and in a bitterly contested campaign he took sufficient votes from Guesde to ensure the victory of the Opportunist candidate. Guesde, too, was denounced by his opponent as a Boulangist and even as a German agent. He sued for libel and was successfully defended by the young Radical lawyer, Millerand. Nor had other socialists fared well. Basly in Paris, Jean Dormoy in Montluçon, Marc Delcluze in the Pas-de-Calais, and others all did poorly. Longuet had

lost in Corbevoie. Lafargue pointed to only two successes: Eugène Baudin, a Vierzon municipal councillor, and Christophe Thivier, a former miner and now municipal councillor of Commentry. Yet Baudin was a Blanquist associated with Vaillant, and Thivier had campaigned as a Boulangist. Only after his victory would the latter affiliate with the Parti Ouvrier—and was to break with it three years later over the question of the general strike. Guesdists ran candidates in seventeen constituencies but gathered only about 25,000 votes, or about one-quarter of one percent of the voters registered. The party, it was clear, was still an “instructor” party. Its audience may have grown since 1882, but it could only propagandize: it could not mobilize. Morbidly pessimistic, Lafargue described the losses as “a rout” and the defeat as “deplorable.” Boulangism had turned the election into one between republicans and antirepublicans, and “the less said about it the better.”<sup>46</sup>

On the other hand, Engels saw the election as a relative success and criticized the “melancholy French” (*pleurnichards*) for their pessimism. “Because Paul and Guesde have not succeeded,” he wrote Laura, “they seem to despair of everything . . .” Engels saw signs of progress in that Marxists won twice the number of votes won by the Possibilists and elected five deputies to their two. Most important was the failure of Boulangism and monarchism. The Opportunists had emerged as the new conservative party. They would compete with Radicals, who spoke for the petite bourgeoisie, while socialists spoke for the workers and would eventually triumph. Meanwhile the field was cleared for the struggle of the “three great sections of French society: the bourgeoisie, the petite-bourgeoisie, and the peasant-workers.” Although conservative, the next government would for the first time consist only of bourgeois republicans. And these moderate republicans, he pointed out, would no longer be able to proclaim that the Republic was in danger, enabling Radicals to henceforth constitute a “loyal opposition.”<sup>47</sup>

For Lafargue, the election nevertheless revealed that Possibilists, allied with middle-class republicans in a common anti-Boulangist (i.e., antirevolutionary) struggle, continued to win working-class votes. Hence his disappointment: only the Parti Ouvrier had remained faithful to the revolutionary impulse.<sup>48</sup> Significantly, the campaign had also confirmed Lafargue’s view of the importance of the small peasant agricultural landholder. It had also stirred dreams of a future victorious election for himself.

His spirits rose after his return from England, and the Hyde Park May Day celebration he had participated in. Cheered by the ebullient crowds, Lafargue more forcefully than ever spoke out for socialist union, and more bitterly than ever regretted the divisions in socialist ranks sown by Boulangism. He was cheered, too, by the POF's Lille Congress held in October 1890, the party's first since 1884. Aside from the two founding congresses—the International's Paris Congress and the already legendary Marseilles Congress of 1879—that at Lille was “the most important one we have ever had in France.” And buoyed by the success of the first May Day celebrations, the delegates had called for more of the same the following year.<sup>49</sup>

Lacking much of a national structure before 1890, the POF had been little more than “a sect,” although in the Nord it began acting as a mass party. (In the 1888 municipal elections, Nord Guesdists had placed stress on such reforms as price controls and had entered into coalitions with Radicals; they consequently elected municipal councilors in Roubaix and won sixteen percent of the vote in Lille.) At the Lille Congress, the Parti Ouvrier approved the plans previously drafted for a more elaborate organization, although it was still far from centralized and no strong regional organization was to emerge until the 1890s. Isolated groups were encouraged to coalesce into *agréations*. The two secretarial posts were formalized: one for domestic affairs (to develop and maintain ties with groups in France) and one for external matters (to cement ties with foreign socialist parties). Lafargue was confirmed as foreign secretary, and Guesde, as domestic secretary. Within a decade the members enrolled in the party would increase eightfold, from two thousand to sixteen thousand, and between 1888 and 1892 the number of voters supporting the POF would triple.<sup>50</sup> Thus the Parti Ouvrier was becoming a party like other parties, able to participate in legislative life at local and regional—and soon national—levels and able to adjust to circumstances, which implied a softening of its intransigence and a willingness to work for reforms.

Although he no longer practiced medicine, Lafargue was impressed by news of recent advances, particularly of the German biologist Koch's discovery of inoculating antitoxins, one “so important that it silences many people's chauvinism. Hypodermic treatment is, I believe, the most important medical discovery ever made: it will revolutionise therapeutics altogether.” However, his long-standing animosity to his once chosen profession resurfaced when at the end of the year



both Lafargues came down with the flu. Paul made light of what he called a new name for the old *grippe*; “while one can cure the grippe by oneself, one needs an M.D. to cure influenza.”<sup>51</sup>

Even though Paul tried desperately to earn a livelihood through his writings, money problems continued to plague the Lafargues, who, although they never ceased to do so, disliked to impose on Engels. In November 1888, when Engels was somewhat hard-pressed himself and could not comply in full, Lafargue apologized for being a burden. He described his efforts to earn money: by contributing to *Die Neue Zeit* and eking out some royalties from German editions of his pamphlets; by possibly writing for *Le Petit Lyonnais*, a paper restored by Vaughan and open to socialists; and by submitting articles to *La Nouvelle Revue* and to *La Revue scientifique*.<sup>52</sup> Unfortunately, publication in Adam’s *Revue* did not bring the hoped-for attention, and the review itself could publish only one or two of his articles a year. The most consistent source of revenue remained Kautsky’s journal, to which he contributed some forty articles between its founding in 1883 and 1910. Kautsky wanted Lafargue to discuss the French socialist scene and provide theoretical analyses, and in his afterword to the Engels-Lafargue correspondence, Emile Bottigelli believed that it was Lafargue’s relationship with Kautsky that induced Lafargue to take a more “centrist” stand and accept the reformism that the party was to embrace.<sup>53</sup>

Though she had contributed to Paul’s campaign expenses in 1889, his mother, who had reached her eightieth birthday in 1890, only sporadically advanced funds, regardless of her son’s importuning visits to Bordeaux. Her death late in 1899 was to bring a modest inheritance.<sup>54</sup> That the Lafargues nevertheless managed on occasion to keep a maid comes as no surprise in an age noted for cheap and plentiful domestic labor. Disoriented by the death (on November 4, 1890) of Helene Demuth and aware of his own mortality, Engels realized that he was losing family and friends and pleaded all the more strongly with Marx’s two surviving daughters to visit him more frequently.<sup>55</sup>

After the Lille Congress, Lafargue tried to become a correspondent for one of the Berlin socialist papers and discussed the possibility with Liebknecht. He learned, however, that Guesde was already a contributor and accordingly stepped aside. With his three children and considerable debts, “Guesde has more need to earn the money than I do,” he told the German party chief.<sup>56</sup> Even though not close and often in disagreement, most recently during the Boulanger episode, the two

Marxist leaders respected each other highly. In thanking the Italian socialist Pasquale Martignetti for some money, Paul reminded him of Guesde, “who needs more done for him than we have managed . . . he is the most devoted man in our ranks, who for years has sacrificed himself and his family to propagate our ideas.”<sup>57</sup> And Lafargue, who occasionally provided what financial help he could, showed concern for his colleague’s poor health when he advised him not to take on the management of a small daily newspaper, *Le Combat*. A daily required too much effort and probably would not survive. Perhaps because he took Lafargue’s advice, Guesde limited his connection with the paper to that of contributor.<sup>58</sup>

Lafargue knew he could never approach Guesde as an orator. Contemporaries regarded Guesde’s speaking abilities as equal to those of Lassalle, and even his opponents admitted he was “the most extraordinary extemporaneous speaker of our time . . . fluent and logical, particularly when he treats economic questions.” He was a great improviser, especially when destroying a heckler. To one observer he looked more than ever like an Old Testament prophet: tall and thin, with black hair reaching almost to his shoulders. And with his pale face he appeared to many as a mystic. After a few hesitant first sentences, the words flowed in “a clear metallic voice, sharp at times, often like the rhythmic beats of a hammer.” His finale portrayed collectivism as a life of happiness and plenty; and it was here that he rose to his full height, long hands raised while his audience sat transfixed, visions of the new world before them. After the break with the Possibilists in 1882, Guesde crossed and recrossed France during the next eight years, speaking (according to one estimate) to no less than 1,200 audiences, slowed only by poor health and family cares, and prison terms.<sup>59</sup>

Lafargue spent the 1890 Christmas holiday with the Avelings. He had expressed a wish to see the slums of London’s East End, and on Christmas eve the labor leader Will Thorne took him on a guided tour. Especially memorable was the walk along the docks, past opium dens and prostitutes waiting for debarking sailors. But it was the number of authentic workingmen sitting on the Town Council that especially impressed the visitor.<sup>60</sup>

After his return to Paris, in the midst of three weeks of below-freezing weather, with the Seine choked by ice floes and the Marne frozen over, Lafargue hoped to secure a post lecturing on labor history offered—thanks to Vaillant, a member of its municipal council—by the

city of Paris. To prepare for these free public lectures, Lafargue read—or reread—Engels’s *Condition of the Working Classes in England* and Andrew Ure’s *Philosophy of Manufacturers*. He predicted that if he got the job he would be “out of [his] difficulties at last.” Having heard this many times before, Engels was probably not surprised when it did not materialize. But he never pressed Paul to find steady employment and appreciated his attempts to support himself through his writings.<sup>61</sup> He could not have dreamed that within a year Marx’s son-in-law would be seated in the Chamber of Deputies.

## 6 Fusillade at Fourmies

Late in the spring of 1891, Lafargue turned down an invitation from Deville, because, he explained, that day he was scheduled to give a talk in Wignehies, “a small industrial city ten kilometers from Fourmies.” Lafargue was trying to bring all the socialist factions (aside from the Possibilists) together for the forthcoming May Day demonstration, and in the preceding weeks *Le Socialiste* seemed to speak of little else. The previous January he said that the government, represented by Minister of Interior Ernest Constans, was seeking precisely to prevent such cooperation. Engels was supportive: he recalled how Marx had told Liebknecht to cooperate in joint ventures with the Lassalleans.<sup>1</sup>

Lafargue was anxious that this “international show of solidarity” succeed. He had favored united action before the 1889 International Congress, when he had written several articles on the subject.<sup>2</sup> As the POF secretary responsible for relations with foreign parties, he had played an important part in the first May Day success and wanted a repeat performance. Hence his frustration when he learned from newspaper accounts that the Germans and the British were afraid to risk demonstrating on a workday and once more would celebrate instead on May 3, a Sunday. French workers looked forward to May 1, he wrote Engels, and would be “bitterly disappointed” if the strongest socialist party again postponed its own celebration. “We covered up its flabby conduct last year,” he complained.<sup>3</sup>

Defensive as ever with regard to the German party, Engels reminded him that in republican France workers enjoyed the political rights that the French bourgeoisie had had to grant them in order to defeat the royalists. If the SPD, a disciplined and growing party that constituted “a genuine force,” fell into the government’s trap and demonstrated on May 1, it would be crushed and the movement set back a decade. The party had an obligation to Europe and the United States not to let this happen. Engels could not have made it clearer that nothing counted as much as the survival of German Social Democracy.

The French, he said, showed more interest in “theatrical effects”; the Germans (and the British), in “fundamentals.”<sup>4</sup>

Lafargue, however, saw simultaneous demonstrations as a way of “shaking up the masses,” and he insisted on the attractiveness in France of the “international character” of May Day. As for “theatrical effects,” the French Revolution of 1789 was itself a “vast melodrama.” Rather than speak again at a Hyde Park demonstration, he would join in efforts to coordinate those in France: a joint organizing committee was getting offers to help from “all corners of the country.”<sup>5</sup> One protest meeting followed another, and socialist municipalities proclaimed that as a sign of mourning they would refuse to celebrate Bastille Day. It was in this climate that Lafargue planned to make a speaking tour in the Nord.<sup>6</sup>

News of his impending visit reached the department by April 1. The mayor of Fourmies, an industrial textile town near Lille on Lafargue’s schedule, asked the Paris police about him: he wanted the information in order “to understand the effect [the speaker] could have on the working class and the measures to take to assure and maintain order.” The prefect sent a brief biography, acknowledging Lafargue’s parents as French but stating that during the Paris Commune he had received orders to rouse the provinces to launch similar uprisings. He described Paul as a “committed revolutionary” and as a “man of action” who had been imprisoned in 1883 because of his “violent nature.”<sup>7</sup>

Lafargue appeared pleased with the enthusiastic receptions he received at Fourmies on April 12, at Wignehies the day before, and at Anor on April 13, all textile manufacturing centers in the southwest corner of the Nord Department, before he was to continue on to Calais. In these speeches he argued that the pope had “rallied” to the conservative republic in an effort to disarm republican adversaries of the church in France and to divert workers from defending their economic interests. He then popularized classical Marxist themes: “In the times of feudal chateaus, the lords defended their serfs . . . Today the bourgeoisie is condemned in turn; it must disappear; its grave is dug; it only remains to push them into it.” The bourgeois revolution had not aided the workers; their sole solution lay in collectivism. In apocalyptic terms he described conditions as having worsened; there was no protection against employers; hence the need for the eight-hour workday.

These remarks were reported in the local press, for example, in the April 19 issue of the socialist newspaper of Saint-Quentin, *La Défense*

*des travailleurs*, which described successful meetings after which “everyone spoke of socialism.” Three days later, *Le Socialiste* reported that “in the workshops, in the cabarets, socialism is spoken of everywhere: of the eight hour day, of the May 1 demonstration. Employers are beginning to show anxiety over this agitation and are asking what they can do to check it.”<sup>8</sup> An elated Lafargue relished the enthusiasm and seemed to take as much delight in “this idea that all the workers of Europe and America will lay down their tools on the same day” as did the workers themselves, whom he described as “intoxicated” by the prospect. And he predicted that May 1 in the provinces would be more important than in Paris.<sup>9</sup>

The Nord was especially beset by labor problems. An economic crisis in 1891 drove down the prices paid for wool products, which unlike cotton prices had held steady throughout the 1880s. And as textile exports dropped, unemployment, in a particularly bleak winter, rose. Poor sales had provided manufacturers with a pretext to cut wages, and workers struck several times to restore salaries and organize a trade union. Economic unrest compounded long-standing discontent at the workplace, which was especially unhealthy and unsanitary in the textile industry. As a historian of the subject observed, “workers constantly inhaled bits of cotton, jute, hemp, and wool. The dust, moreover, clung to their skin, hair, and clothes, which in turn remained soaked by the constant steam present in most work-rooms.” The humidity was accompanied by the high temperatures required in textile mills, and “seconds after entering these hot, steamy rooms, workers were coated with dust, drenched, and sweating.”<sup>10</sup> Not surprisingly, the incidence of disease—particularly tuberculosis and alcoholism (workers believed that alcohol cleared the dust from their lungs)—and illegitimacy was among the highest in the nation. On the eve of May 1, employers published a declaration, reproduced in *Le Progrès du Nord* two days later, stating their intention to defend themselves “collectively, solidarily, and financially” against the “revolutionary theories of some agitators who alone can profit from trouble and disorder.”<sup>11</sup>

For May Day, the worker and Guesdist organizer Hippolyte Culine organized a peaceful demonstration. The 1,500 striking workers of the Le Fourneau mill led other textile workers in a morning parade. Then shortly before noon, the union representatives mobilized by Culine carried the workers’ demands, headed by that asking for the eight-hour workday, to the town hall.<sup>12</sup> At the insistence of local employers

and at the request of the mayor, the prefect had summoned two infantry companies to stand by. At six in the evening, some demonstrators were arrested for having urged millworkers to join them. The crowd grew noisy and demanded their release. Stones were hurled at the gendarmes. Troops rushed in to protect them and, on order of their bewildered commander, fired into the crowd from one to four minutes. Ten people were killed and thirty to sixty (estimates varied) wounded; of the dead, four were under twenty years of age; of the wounded, twelve were under twenty-one, including several infants.<sup>13</sup>

The repercussions of the “fusillade de Fourmies” were heard throughout France and Europe. Municipal councils and trade unions voted resolutions of solidarity with the workers and promised aid. The company that fired, the 145th of the line, was insulted by civilians in its garrison town and finally transferred. *Chansonniers* put the event into song. The issue of *Le Socialiste* that described the attack (May 6) appeared in a black border. That of the following week carried Lafargue’s commentary: that the army in capitalist civilization was consecrated exclusively to the service of capitalists and that the defense of national territory was secondary. Writing in *Die Neue Zeit*, Lafargue only distinguished the May 1 demonstrations from other great *journées*, such as July 14 and March 18, because each May Day demonstrator believed that he was part of a larger international proletariat.<sup>14</sup>

At the Palais Bourbon on May 4, the socialist deputies Dumay and Boyer condemned the government, and then Ernest Roche, elected as a Boulangist running on a socialist platform, closed his detailed narrative of the shooting—and unleashed pandemonium—by suddenly holding aloft a blood-stained shirt with six bullet holes to demonstrate wanton murder by the soldiers. Although the Chamber voted to send fifty thousand francs to the families of the victims, the government disclaimed responsibility and rejected a parliamentary investigation into the conduct of the army as “sowing indiscipline.” Four days later the deputies rejected any amnesty for those accused of inciting the crowd.<sup>15</sup>

The situation grew even more tense when a general strike, declared in Belgium, was accompanied by widespread striking in the Nord. Troops were reinforced. Minister of Interior Constans appeared determined to place the blame on socialists in general and on the Parti Ouvrier leadership in particular. Both Culine and Lafargue were indicted for provocation leading to disorder: the former for his remarks

on May 1, the latter for his speech of April 11. An official report, completed two days after the event, maintained that responsibility lay with outside agitators who had planted “false and subversive ideas” in the minds of workers.<sup>16</sup> A story in the May 5 issue of *Le Temps* agreed: “The Paris socialist, Paul Lafargue; Renard from St. Quentin; and an individual named Culine . . . worked the population to fever pitch during the weeks preceding the shootings.” Culine, it was alleged, stated that “bosses are useless beasts, and what does one do with useless beasts? One destroys them.” Other witnesses, however, were cited as having heard him repudiate any recourse to violence.<sup>17</sup>

Lafargue’s first reactions showed that he first thought of the consequences for his party. “Today the whole district has been won for socialism” thanks to the “May Day martyrs provided by the government.” He anticipated that Constans might indict him, but by May 7 figured that Constans was more interested in hushing up the affair.<sup>18</sup> In holding socialists responsible, “capitalists endow socialists with magical powers of persuasion,” he wrote in *Le Socialiste* on May 20. The real revolutionaries were capitalist financiers, thanks to the discontent they generated.

However, Lafargue erred in thinking that the government was trying to conceal the extent of the shooting: it was rather collecting evidence to establish his guilt in provoking disorder. Both police and the Paris press pointed to his revolutionary past.<sup>19</sup> Reproducing charges that had appeared in newspapers in the Nord, *Le Temps*, in a front-page story on May 4, stated that Lafargue had told recruits to turn their weapons on officers when ordered to shoot. The great republican daily chose not to print Lafargue’s letter of denial, but it appeared in *Le Socialiste* on May 17. He said he had published in the socialist press of Spain, England, and France for twenty years, and challenged anyone to find words like those supposedly said at Fourmies. He never spoke of dynamite because he was “too much the theoretician.” Socialist speeches did not invite killings; and as evidence he cited Decazeville, where the manager was murdered well before any socialists appeared on the scene.<sup>20</sup> Nor was Culine the agent provocateur alleged by the newspaper, but rather “the organizer of the Workers Party for the whole Fourmies region”; and so employers were taking advantage of the opportunity to get rid of him.<sup>21</sup>

Lafargue asked the young left-wing deputy, Millerand, whom he called the “future Clemenceau of the far left,” to defend him. Moving toward socialism himself (but like another Radical convert, Jean



Jaurès, to the reformist and not the Guesdist camp), Millerand had made a specialty of defending socialists and labor leaders, and both his competence and his respectability prompted Lafargue's choice. Millerand would not agree to defend "a guilty defendant who had preached pillage and murder," Lafargue told a reporter.<sup>22</sup> The lawyer waived any fee, and Lafargue, who believed that the publicity of the trial might make a future parliamentary victory possible, asked Engels to cover Millerand's expenses. "Whether I am sentenced or acquitted," he admitted, "this trial will provide an electoral basis for me in France." He recollected that earlier "a nobody" had called himself a workers' candidate and compiled three thousand votes in the district.<sup>23</sup>

As the trial unfolded after July 4 at the assize court of Douai, it became clear that the case against Culine, and especially against Lafargue, was weak and that the trial was indeed the work of manufacturers and government officials to create a "diversion."<sup>24</sup> Why had the government chosen to prosecute? Probably because the shootings had come as a shock. Journalists had flocked to the area, and their newspapers presented conflicting views. For government organs, the explanation lay in the persistence of Boulangism. The Catholic press held the Jewish subprefect and modern civilization itself responsible but agreed that Boulangists were trying to exploit events. Socialists and Radicals, on the other hand, attacked the government and demanded an investigation. The public appeared baffled. A ready scapegoat was found in Culine and other socialist agitators. *Le Petit Nord* on May 4 condemned all three speakers but especially Culine, the "ringleader," a "former Boulangist," a "sinister rogue," and a "deserter." Culine, a onetime locksmith and mechanic in the Ardennes, had been condemned for desertion in 1872 but amnestied in 1880.<sup>25</sup>

Lafargue was formally accused of incitement to murder, specifically with telling his audience that although French workers failed to match their English counterparts in organizational skills, in their struggle against the new enemy ("the bosses"), they could benefit from having been soldiers and having learned to handle firearms. "As for you young men who will soon leave for military service," he was quoted as saying, "if ever you are ordered to fire [against demonstrators] and in whatever circumstances, turn around and fire backwards." This was the essence of the prosecutor's case. Yet a police report described the Fourmies theater, in which Lafargue spoke on April 11 to an audience of about five hundred, as calm and Culine's May 1 appeal as having placed stress on the need to keep order.<sup>26</sup>

The defense argued that as a Marxist Lafargue had consistently deplored the methods used by anarchists. Millerand portrayed him as a scientist—a doctor of medicine—and as a theorist. As evidence of Lafargue’s respectability and scholarship, Millerand placed in evidence his articles in *Le Journal des économistes* and the commentary on the 1880 Program, in which the use of dynamite and individual heroics was explicitly rejected. He read a letter from Giard, the Sorbonne professor who had presided over several socialist meetings. Not a Marxist himself, Giard agreed that Lafargue had never urged pillage or murder. The government, the defense argued, not satisfied with Culine, had decided that the conviction of a socialist leader was needed.<sup>27</sup>

The prosecution tried to establish the violent nature of Lafargue’s speech by presenting a past history of violence and revolutionary activity, specifically his 1883 conviction and his speeches in Roubaix in 1884 and in Lille in 1890. Still, the public prosecutor believed that the primary responsibility belonged to Culine, whom he called an active Boulangist agent.<sup>28</sup> And apparently Lafargue said nothing incendiary on April 11: an Opportunist newspaper, *L’Observateur*, had attributed to Lafargue remarks made by Victor Renard, a militant Guesdist newspaper editor and labor organizer from Saint-Quentin, who spoke at the same meeting; it was he who had threatened violence. The error was picked up by *Le Temps*, which, we saw, did not print Lafargue’s denial.

The preliminary judicial inquiry had produced only four witnesses against Lafargue, all of whom opposed him politically: a mill manager; the manager’s friend, a master worker; a notary; and a foreman. Each repeated the remarks allegedly made by the defendant in almost the same words, suggesting they were well coached; one, while giving testimony, repeatedly glanced at notes concealed in his hat. Of the pool of thirty-six possible jurors, moreover, nine were property owners; five, shareholders; five, farmers; eight, merchants; five, industrialists; and the remaining four either belonged to the liberal professions or were retired. (Lafargue later called it a “class jury.”)<sup>29</sup>

The trial was well covered, with both the departmental and Paris press providing detailed accounts. Culine sat in the prisoner’s box; Lafargue, between Millerand and the latter’s assistant, a lawyer assigned to defend Culine. Testifying on the first day, Lafargue showed that the statements imputed to him contradicted his writings. When attacked for condemning an entire financial class, he invoked the his-

tory of the Panama scandal but was reproached with irrelevancy. Could violent remarks have been improvised in the heat of speech? Impossible, he replied, in view of his basic opposition to individual acts of violence. Such comments would have run counter to both his style and his theme. By that evening, Lafargue seemed satisfied with the progress of the trial, and he anticipated that the jury would deliver its verdict the following night.<sup>30</sup>

On the next day, the second, third, and fourth witnesses admitted they had been informed of the first's testimony, and one admitted he had indeed relied on concealed notes. The presiding magistrate acknowledged the similarities in the language used. Millerand cited 210 petitioners who stated they never heard Lafargue speak of murder or pillage. Lafargue only denied the accusation raised against himself; and only after July 11, when a three-month statute of limitations expired, would he acknowledge Renard's incendiary remarks. Aware of the weakness of his case, the prosecutor focused on Culine for the remainder of the trial. Reading from a text that was later published, Millerand made his closing remarks. He expressed amazement at the prosecutor's ignorance of Lafargue's socialist theories and repeated his client's intellectual alibi. Pointing to the inadequacy of the prosecution's witnesses and accusing the government and the police of negligence and incapacity, he asked for acquittal, for the eyes of all France were on Douai and the horror of Fourmies must not be added to.<sup>31</sup>

Even so, the testimony supporting the charge of provocation satisfied the conservative jurors, and after five minutes' deliberation they found both men guilty as charged. Though the father of four and responsible only for organizing an entirely legal demonstration, Culine was sentenced to six years in prison. Ultimately, he successfully petitioned to have the verdict quashed on the ground that misdemeanors committed at public meetings or in the press became void after three months (a legal loophole that Lafargue rejected to avoid giving the impression that he was more concerned for his personal well-being than with the benefits that his party could derive from the injustices committed).<sup>32</sup> Lafargue received a one-year prison term, to begin July 30.

Socialists protested bitterly. The Parti Ouvrier's National Council called the decision a class verdict, and the party "adopted" Culine's wife and children. Their frustration prompted left-wing Radicals such as Millerand and Jean Jaurès formally to announce their conversion to socialism.<sup>33</sup>

Engels agreed that the verdict was “infamous” and the chance of an appeal, slender. But he predicted that Lafargue would probably win a seat in the Chamber and, if elected, would be set free. Paul shared his optimism. Between the trial and the beginning of his imprisonment, Lafargue, Guesde, and Culine spoke to large audiences throughout the department. Delighted by the enthusiasm shown, Lafargue believed that “if the elections were held at the present time, we should certainly both be elected in the Nord Department.” In August, during his last days of freedom, he delivered a speech on almost a daily basis, not only in the Nord, but in Bordeaux, Montluçon, Commeny, and Paris, taking only his final week of freedom for a seaside vacation.<sup>34</sup>

His final appeal having been turned down, Lafargue entered Sainte-Pélagie prison on the morning of July 30. Again Laura had been invited by Engels to stay with him in England and again she had refused. She brought her husband his “trunk, an enormous parcel of papers and manuscripts and a bathing tub.” Because of a mix-up, he first found himself in a debtor’s cell, but within a few days of Millerand’s intervention he was transferred with three other political prisoners to the more comfortable and now familiar political wing of the prison.<sup>35</sup> More restrictions had been applied since his last stay: the number of visitors permitted, for example, was limited.

But an almost unlimited supply of books and newspapers was allowed, and the availability of showers made the tub superfluous. Laura, who visited every other day laden with “mail, books, vegetables, fruit, and new-laid eggs,” found Paul “in high spirits . . . [he] drinks milk on top of wine and scribbles away with a will,” keeps up with his correspondence, “sees all the people he cares to see and saves boot leather.” The other visitors included Liebknecht and his wife Nathalie, on whom Lafargue made a “wonderful impression.” Even so, he and Laura hoped he would be freed within a year.<sup>36</sup>

There was, then, time for reflection and for creative work, and Lafargue was more optimistic than ever. Zola had recently published his novel, *L’Argent*, and Lafargue wrote a long critical study. But plans for research, including an essay on the benefits of socialism for women, promised in an open letter to the women of Wignehies,<sup>37</sup> were shelved when news arrived that the Radical deputy for the first constituency in Lille, Achille Werquin, suddenly died on September 20 of pneumonia and that a by-election was scheduled to fill the vacancy. The first vote was set for October 25, and a runoff, if needed, for November 8. Ten days later Lafargue told Guesde he would announce his candidacy.<sup>38</sup>

On October 2, he suggested the theme on which he would base his

campaign: to give the public the opportunity to judge Fourmies at the ballot box. If it so chose, it could condemn the government's use of the army against labor. In an open letter to the voters of the constituency, he described them as a "national jury" and "in that spirit [accepted] the candidacy of protest [from] the only popular tribunal I acknowledge."<sup>39</sup> If he were temporarily released in order to campaign—and there were precedents for this—he would do so; if not, Guesde, who was to manage the campaign, would use the government's refusal to release him as a weapon, and this might even improve his chances. On the grounds that less than half of his sentence had been served, Constans opposed an early release, in spite of appeals from the Parti Ouvrier, the Lille and Bordeaux trade unions, the General Council of the Seine Department, and even one of Lafargue's opposition candidates.<sup>40</sup>

The news of Lafargue's candidacy excited the workers of Fourmies. A group of them met that very night to draft a letter of appreciation and congratulations to the "comrades in Lille."<sup>41</sup> Even so, at first glance the attempt appeared hopeless. In the previous election, Delory, the Workers Party candidate, had polled only 1,406 votes, while the republican candidate received almost six times as many, and the monarchist candidate, four times as many. Laura thought a miracle was required for her husband to win, especially after the Radicals, refusing to believe Paul had any chance, put up a candidate of their own, which would effectively split the left-wing vote. Besides Paul, three candidates ran: Eugène Roche, the Radical; Hector Depasse, an Opportunist; and Bièré, a moderate. Each was supported by a newspaper. Depasse and Roche were both lawyers; Bièré was an engineer. The only Paris daily to support Lafargue was Ernest Roche's *L'Intransigeant*, but Paul, as ever, was hopeful. He believed that Delory would have won in 1889 if not for the Boulangist candidate who pulled votes away, and Boulangism was now dead.<sup>42</sup>

The Guesdists waged an all-out campaign. In a stream of pamphlets and flyers, Lafargue, with Guesde's editing, treated his candidacy as providing the nation with an opportunity to judge the shootings, that is, to cast a protest vote. On the other side, his opponents waged a slanderous campaign against "the son-in-law of Professor Marx." Extracts from Lafargue's strongest writings were published, with those from *Pius IX in Paradise* being posted on church doors in the district; and the question of his nationality was repeatedly raised.<sup>43</sup>

Guesde and Parti Ouvrier members in the district staged thirty-four rallies in thirty-eight days. In Lille voters saw campaign rallies every

day and sometimes several in one day, particularly in the two sections heavily populated by workers. The same themes were repeated. Workers in Calais, following events, urged a vote for Lafargue in the following terms: "You are faced by the candidates of those who have shot and by the candidate of those who were shot." The Duc-Quercys and Ferrouls campaigning for Lafargue used more violent language. The report of the special commissar of Lille quotes them as saying, "The Republic has in the past twenty years done nothing for the proletariat. War has been unleashed against the people; they must reply by the ballot; they must oppose this murderous and provocative government with Lafargue."<sup>44</sup>

Some of Lafargue's supporters showed themselves as openly anti-Semitic, directing their fire against the Opportunist candidate Bièré, who was Jewish. Guesde, however, took a higher tone, basing the campaign on socialist doctrine and repudiating violence. Socialist speakers reminded their audiences not to confuse them with anarchists, and the German Social Democratic Party contributed four hundred francs. From his prison cell, Lafargue sent Guesde a suggestion for a campaign slogan: "Remember, not to vote for Lafargue is to vote for Constans."<sup>45</sup>

Parents and relatives of the victims worked to get out the vote: the women of Fourmies appealed to the women of Lille for their husbands' support. And on the first ballot Lafargue gathered a healthy plurality of more than five thousand votes (Depasse having emerged a distant second with less than three thousand), or nearly thirty percent, in a constituency where one year earlier Delory won only seven percent, revealing the extent to which the shooting had made an impact. Paul was enthusiastic about the future of socialism in the Nord: he could, if he wanted, be elected mayor of Lille.<sup>46</sup>

Nor had Lafargue's victory been anticipated by the mayor or the prefect. As analyzed by the conservative newspaper *La Vraie française* on October 26, the POF vote had indeed increased dramatically, and the newspaper speculated that many royalists and Bonapartists, with no candidate of their own, had voted for Lafargue to show their hatred of Opportunism. (Roche, who would have been their first choice, was found too anticlerical.) Another postelection analysis showed that Lafargue received four-fifths of his votes from workers.<sup>47</sup>

The Paris press, which had played down the election, was astonished. The conservative *Le Soleil* (October 30) called the victory "a thunderbolt from the blue" and predicted that Lafargue's five

thousand votes would cause "trouble" for the government. *Le Gaulois* (October 27) predicted an early fall of the ministry. Party workers, related Laura, "were beside themselves with joy."<sup>48</sup> Thanking his voters, Lafargue called it "a first victory against the common enemy . . . Constans and [his] band of opportunists," and credited Lille with "commanding the Republic to embark on the path of social reform."<sup>49</sup> But because he had failed to win a majority, a runoff vote was scheduled.

To present a common front against Lafargue, Bière withdrew in favor of Depasse. Roche, on the other hand, withdrew in favor of Lafargue. The campaign now intensified as a Lafargue victory became a distinct possibility. Within the department, the conservative press launched a furious counteroffensive. *Le Grand Echo du Nord et du Pas-de-Calais*, until then neutral, attacked him for his origins, his ties to the "Prussian" Karl Marx, and his writings. He was denounced as "a mortal enemy of society, of the family, of the employer, of private ownership, of the nation" and told to return to "his own country, Germany." Economic reprisals were threatened. Should he be elected, the Senate would reject a customs tariff, forcing the closure of mills in the Nord (an action in any case threatened by employers), and the wounded of Fourmies were threatened with the loss of their indemnities if they did not sign an appeal against Lafargue. *Le Progrès du Nord* stated that his election would "break with the national policy of the past twenty years . . . to install the republic of the class struggle." On election day, three thousand posters went up in the constituency urging voters to send Lafargue back to Germany.<sup>50</sup>

The police reported that the Possibilists—and the more union-oriented group led by the typographer Jean Allemane that had recently seceded from them—feared they would be rivaled by the Guesdists should Lafargue win, and in that case "a new period of revolutionary agitation" would begin.<sup>51</sup> Despite the efforts of Millerand and Roche, a majority of deputies voted against releasing Lafargue and allowing him to campaign on his own behalf. Millerand spoke for Lafargue at Lille. Lafargue had sought his help in getting out the still-hesitant middle-class vote, and the lawyer's repudiation of violence as the basis of socialist policy appealed to a considerable number of Radical voters. On the following day, November 8, Lafargue defeated his Opportunist opponent by 1,295 votes of almost 12,000 cast.<sup>52</sup> In that week's edition of *Le Socialiste*, a jubilant Lafargue wrote that "it is not a man who was elected last Sunday; it was a party; it was a class, it was the Parti Ouvrier, program in one hand and the deaths of Fourmies in

the other, that pitched into the capitalist republic and turned it upside down.”

For one historian his victory was facilitated by Catholic voters, whose spokesmen practiced a *politique du pire*; they spoke the workers’ language and helped get out the vote for Lafargue—especially in the center of the city, where the previous socialist vote had proved disappointing. Still, Lafargue’s chief voting strength came from the more working-class quarters, where sixty to seventy percent of the voters usually supported the most politically assertive (*affirmé*)—and not necessarily the most radical—candidate, who in 1891 was a socialist.<sup>53</sup>

In a letter to Bebel, Engels called Lafargue’s election “a great victory” and predicted “great consequences in France [because] the left had parliamentary socialists.” He told Sorge that Lafargue could lead the seven or eight nonentities in parliament, provided that he could “control his Negro blood.”<sup>54</sup> From the other side of the political spectrum, Leroy-Beaulieu held a similar view: the election was the most important since 1871. “With Lafargue,” he wrote, “the son-in-law of Karl Marx, collectivism entered the Chamber of Deputies . . . Make no mistake! The sudden entry of collectivism in Parliament is an event . . . Take care!” Aware that Lafargue was not much of an orator, he added: “If by chance Messieurs Jaurès and Guesde are elected in turn, France will have the equivalent of Bebel and Liebknecht.”<sup>55</sup> Within twenty-four hours of the victory, rejecting a pardon and invoking an 1875 law that postponed at least for the duration of his term in office the detention of any deputy or senator, Millerand sponsored a resolution asking for Lafargue’s immediate release. The resolution was adopted almost without opposition.<sup>56</sup>

On November 17, Paris Marxists organized a dance and meeting at the Tivoli Vauxhall to celebrate the victory. The Lafargues returned to Lille that same night and on their arrival at 2 A.M. were greeted by another crowd of well-wishers, who carried Paul off in triumph. He spoke to four hundred people in a packed hall.<sup>57</sup> The crush was immense; doors and windows were smashed by those desperate to get in, although the workers among them knew they would be fined for missing work. He had to give a second speech before the crowd would consent to leave; and on his own departure, he was escorted by hordes of people shouting “Vive Lafargue” and singing revolutionary songs. Back in Paris in time for the Chamber session, Lafargue admitted to “beginning to feel worn out by the rush in which I am living.”<sup>58</sup>

Still, the battle was not over. The Chamber had to validate all elec-



tion results, and the question of Lafargue's national origins had been raised even before the final vote. He was again accused of being both "a Prussian" and "a man without a country," as well as a "free trader," the "candidate of civil war," and "impious." One Paris newspaper printed Depasse's letter to the relevant Chamber committee questioning Lafargue's citizenship.<sup>59</sup>

Critics claimed that he was not French but Cuban, and asked why he had not performed military service in 1870. The order for his arrest and his flight from France were uncovered. In *Le Figaro*, Albert Milhaud wondered why Lille voters would want a Cuban member of parliament, and the same journalist in a wholly unsubstantiated story claimed the Sûreté had learned he had been an outlaw in South America, wanted for murder and counterfeiting.<sup>60</sup> The police, too, asked whether Lafargue was French and began collecting evidence, particularly material on his activities in 1871–1872, to prove he was not. Lafargue, Guesde, and Longuet were interviewed by reporters who wrote stories under such headlines as "Est-il Français?" and "Le Cas de M. Lafargue." The question of whether he had been expelled as a foreigner in 1871 came up repeatedly.<sup>61</sup>

In an interview in *Le Matin*, Lafargue denied this and revealed his antecedents: his French father, who had supplied an army replacement for his son; and the order for Lafargue's arrest, but not his expulsion, in 1871.<sup>62</sup> Although he had not supported Lafargue in the election and his views had not been solicited, Arthur Ranc (in 1871 Léon Gambetta's police chief and now a more conservative publisher) replied to the charge of pro-Germanism by publishing a letter in the November 17 issue of *Le Paris*: Lafargue in 1870 had "behaved and spoke like a patriot, like a Frenchman," and Ranc had volunteered this testimony because he "felt he owed it to Lafargue."<sup>63</sup>

The material gathered by both police and press covered his origins, his role in the Liège students' congress, his escape over the Pyrenees, and his work on behalf of the (First) International. Then came a revelation: he was reported as having said at Bordeaux on November 23 that during the Franco-Prussian War he had tried to supply the Government of National Defense with information obtained from German socialists in the International serving as Prussian army officers, information allegedly revealing that Prussia could not continue fighting much longer. This story, as well as the interview given to *Le Matin*, which included a similar reference to a comment passed on to Ranc about news heard from a Prussian officer that Germany could

not last another month, were picked up by Reuters and then by the British press.

On reading these allegations in the *Evening Standard* and taking them at face value, Engels was livid. He found it an example of unbelievable stupidity and hence inexcusable. Privately, he accused Lafargue of betraying the International by implicating German socialists in a plot of treason. If proven, he told Bebel, the SPD could be destroyed, and the furious Engels again described Paul as “stupid, crazy and unfathomable.” Again reflecting attitudes then prevalent, he attributed it to Lafargue’s “Negro blood getting the upper hand.” And given anti-German sentiment in France—shown by the pandemonium that had broken out at the Paris Opera’s performance of Lohengrin twenty years after the Franco-Prussian War—it would have indeed been unthinkable to say this even if true.<sup>64</sup>

On hearing of Engels’s reaction, Laura was indignant. “I think that Paul and I have *done* and *suffered* enough ever since we came over here to further and indeed to invent the cause of internationalism—which primarily means the union of France and Germany—to be quit of charges of that kind.”<sup>65</sup> Paul, less touchy and more insouciant, wrote to Engels from Lyons, where the POF’s National Congress was taking place in late November: “I cannot be held responsible for everything the newspapers have put into my mouth for weeks past.” He maintained he had said only that he did not serve in the 1870–1871 war because he was working to reconstitute the International; that the Internationalists of France, no less than of Germany and of other countries, regarded it as their duty to prevent the crushing of the French Republic by Bismarck’s troops; and that even the German Internationalists protested against the continuation of the war. The thoroughly confused Engels reported this to Bebel and wondered what in fact Lafargue had said, figuring he “either lied or told tales out of school, he alone knows which.”<sup>66</sup>

As both Lafargues vehemently insisted that Paul had been either misquoted or slandered and that he was the “soul of honor,” Engels began to retreat. He told Laura that when she sent him clippings of what her husband was supposed to have told the newspaperman, without comment on her part, he had assumed she was tacitly acknowledging their accuracy. Paul ought to have given a clear denial to reassure the German socialists and to prevent the German bourgeoisie from seizing the opportunity to renew the antisocialist laws.<sup>67</sup>

Laura replied that her husband had only referred to the need to

prevent the French Republic from being crushed and that the statements attributed to him were fabricated by a reporter. Engels thereupon sent Laura's statement to Bebel and expressed relief that matters were over with and that the error was not exploited.<sup>68</sup> Then Engels graciously apologized to Lafargue: "Following your formal repudiation of all the passages in the Bordeaux report of which I had a right to complain, it only remains for me to retract all the wounding words I used towards you, and formally to ask your pardon."<sup>69</sup>

Yvonne Kapp, the translator of the Engels-Lafargue correspondence, was nevertheless convinced that Lafargue had been indiscreet. For her, the incident once more revealed the salient features of Lafargue's character. Scarcely upset by the possible consequences of his blunder, Lafargue had again revealed his "immaturity." Although "passionately zealous and sincere," and "honest to a fault," he possessed "a vein of youthful naïveté" that could land him in "abysms" of ineptitude. His "high and serious intelligence" failed to provide warning signals; he had no way of knowing when he was off the rails. Still, this endearing clownishness, as Marx had noted, made it difficult not to like him.<sup>70</sup>

A statement from the French consul in Santiago in 1866 certifying his French birth, sent to Paul by his mother, was forwarded to the Chamber. His father's name was found on the voting list for Bordeaux, and additional proofs were made available by Millerand. The relevant committee found him eligible, and on December 27 the Chamber finally approved the results of Lafargue's election and permitted him to take his seat.<sup>71</sup>

## 7 A Dangerous Dream

Six years earlier, Lafargue had expressed his opinion on the task of socialist deputies or socialist municipal councillors: “to bring socialist demands to the heart of bourgeois assemblies, to enter into the breach, always attacking . . . not to reform bourgeois society, but to agitate the working masses, to prepare them to overturn the bourgeois order and to establish the social republic.” He now added that the socialist deputy was a delegate of his party and bound to reflect the party will, and that consequently “never has a party exercised such control over its *élus*.” In addition to party work, the socialist deputy “should appear everywhere his presence is demanded by events,” particularly at the scene of strikes. He was to agitate both in and outside of parliament.<sup>1</sup>

Never having placed a premium on legislative activity, Lafargue believed that deputies had a way of growing increasingly conservative, and could point to Radical members of the Chamber who had refused to participate in the demonstrations protesting the Tonkin wars. Anarchists and “naïve socialists” who hoped for something from parliamentarianism “wasted their breath” in reproaching their bourgeois members for corruption. Incapable of reform, parliament had become a market where influence was peddled.<sup>2</sup>

Lafargue had been elected on a program calling for amnesty for those convicted of political crimes: workers accused of illegal striking and socialist militants who had participated in May Day demonstrations and had been found guilty of press offenses or illegal assembly. The day following certification of his election, Lafargue proposed political amnesty for “people like Culine.” On December 7, he went to Guesde’s apartment at 26 avenue d’Orléans to meet with Guesde and Alexandre Zévaès, a law student (whose real name was Alexandre Bourson) who had recently founded a revolutionary students’ group and was active in the Parti Ouvrier’s Paris organization. In the former’s small study, the three men discussed the speech Lafargue was to give in support of his amnesty bill. Lafargue wrote on a small table filled with

papers, brochures, and newspapers, while Guesde walked about, urging his colleagues to show the growing importance of the socialist movement, to relate its development to economic evolution, and hence to ask for amnesty as a momentary truce in the class struggle, as a sign of appeasement after a particularly bloody event.<sup>3</sup>

The next day Lafargue addressed the Chamber for the first time. The deputies awaited him with anticipation. He had claimed urgency, and there was a curious silence as he approached the podium. There had been no specifically socialist speeches since 1848, since the days of Proudhon, Louis Blanc, and Victor Considérant (a disciple of Fourier, popular enough to be elected a deputy in both 1848 and 1849).

Was this low estimation of parliamentary activity a premonition? Lafargue was never a good orator, and his opening speech proved a disaster. The murmuring with which he was greeted turned to heckling when he took notes from his pocket, and during the course of his remarks he was repeatedly interrupted by cries and shouts. Lafargue had confronted unfriendly audiences but never anticipated so much hostility. His delivery, tedious and rambling, contained naive and irrelevant comments, and he compounded his mistakes by replying to his hecklers. The Chamber's presiding officer had to ask him to get to the point.<sup>4</sup>

One aside, made perhaps as part of an appeal for Catholic support of his amnesty proposal in view of the recently published papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, or perhaps as an acknowledgment of the support given him by Catholic workers in Lille, was to cost him dearly: an unfortunate reference to Count Albert de Mun as having delivered "one of the best socialist speeches ever made." (De Mun had shown some sympathy for socialism in 1888 when he said that he welcomed the challenge it presented and that he was not afraid of it.)<sup>5</sup> And when, turning to the left, Lafargue described the campaign waged against the separation of church and state as "a trap with which you have amused yourself for twenty years," he was roundly booed; there were accusations that he was in the pay of the church and cries of "enough." Only the Parti Ouvrier deputies Jourde and Ferroul, and two or three Boulangists tried to applaud; others on the left were incensed. The left-center deputy from Dreux, Gabriel Terrier, sarcastically suggested asking "our lady of Lourdes for the solution of social problems." The former Communard and now Blanquist deputy from the Cher, Eugène Baudin, stated flatly that socialists were republicans and atheists; Millerand said socialists must support the struggle against the church;

and de Mun, with disdain, denied he was a socialist. Most socialist deputies disavowed Lafargue's stated readiness to seek support from the church and "from anyone willing to lighten human misery."

Lafargue warned his listeners that persecution of socialists only assured their ultimate success. As in Germany, it "swelled socialist ranks," and to keep Culine in prison was to groom him for mayor of Fourmies. Although not representative of their constituents, or rather representative only of the possessing classes (at which point the Chamber's presiding officer called him to order), the deputies would be acting in those classes' best interest by recognizing the need for social legislation. There followed a digression on seventeenth-century novels, and only at the end of his speech did Lafargue get to the question of amnesty. He noted that he had ultimately won his freedom by the grace of universal suffrage; but his point, that the appeasement provided by an amnesty was an indispensable preface to reform, was lost. His bill was easily defeated.<sup>6</sup>

For *Le Temps*, the speech was nevertheless "apocalyptic." More to the point, the police described it as a "disastrous first appearance" and reported that Lafargue had left the Chamber in a state of "violent exasperation." Paris members of the Parti Ouvrier unanimously disavowed its contents. Possibilists condemned his remarks about the church as treason, and in *Le Prolétaire* a few days later Brousse said Lafargue had simply lost control.<sup>7</sup> Still, the POF had long subordinated religious questions to its social agenda and had viewed capitalism, not the church, as the enemy to be fought: anticlericalism was seen as a digression. As far back as 1879, Guesde had congratulated the new pope for showing signs of understanding social issues. As a recipient of their votes, Lafargue acknowledged—and would continue to point to the need for unity of action with—Catholic workers, and so he had praised Leo XIII's encyclical, or at least those parts of it denouncing exploitation. *Le Socialiste* ultimately admitted that Lafargue had "dared to say he preferred even the Christian socialism of a de Mun to the present government's hatred of the working class."<sup>8</sup>

Not atypically, Lafargue took a favorable view of his speech in his account to Engels: "it was a dynamite bomb, which caused a general explosion . . . Despite everything, I held my own against them all." The deputies, especially the Radicals, whom he dismissed as spokesmen for capitalism, were infuriated because "I was determined to put the matter on a genuine socialist basis for my opening."<sup>9</sup> But to erase the perception that he had defended clerical interests, two weeks later

Lafargue submitted a bill on the separation of church and state. Based on a decree issued by the Paris Commune, it abrogated the ninety-year-old Concordat and called for the return of church property to the nation. To stifle Opportunist charges that he tolerated clericalism, he denounced the religious oppression of workers, some of whom were forced, for example, to march to the confessional by their employers. He admitted he was not optimistic: intellectual emancipation followed economic emancipation; and he also sensed the issue might divert working-class energy from its material interests.

It was only when Engels tactfully applauded the arguments made in his maiden speech as promising to “reestablish clearness” after “the violent interruptions from all sides [that] had prevented him from developing clearly and unmistakably what he intended to say” that Lafargue could admit that he had indeed been unnerved. Never so badly treated by an audience, he had erred in trying to respond. The “unaccustomed surroundings” and frequent interruptions had forced him to make “some ill-judged statements,” and the sooner he became familiar with the parliamentary forms, standing orders, and business habits of the Chamber, the better. But, picking up on Engels’s comment and demonstrating yet once more his ability to put the best light even on a disaster, he said that by calling for separation—“the most far-reaching and radical such measure ever to have been tabled”—this second speech fortunately “parried the blow.” He would be on his guard against future heckling. And the subsequent applause from working-class audiences must have proved a welcome tonic: for immediately after his inaugural speech, Lafargue had embarked on a round of talks in the Nord, and then another in the Rhône.<sup>10</sup>

That his debut was a failure could scarcely be denied. Lafargue would never feel—or be allowed to feel—comfortable in the Chamber and would never pick up its practices or terminology. For example, in the session of June 13, 1892, his use of the word “motion” for “bill” evoked bursts of laughter. Engels encouraged Laura to believe that Paul would not let himself be intimidated and that he would learn to handle the heckling, but acknowledged that Guesde was “a much better speaker.” For Vaillant, the problem lay in Lafargue’s reliance on paradox, “which was badly understood by the Chamber” (although he resorted to it less frequently before working-class audiences).<sup>11</sup>

Lafargue preferred to address local groups throughout the country, giving as his reason the need “to agitate outside to reinforce my position in parliament.” In the six weeks following his release from prison,

between November 9 and December 24, he put his deputy's rail pass to good use: he delivered twenty-three speeches in eighteen towns (chiefly in the Nord and Bordeaux) and expected this pace to continue until the May municipal elections. Every Saturday to Monday was booked through January.<sup>12</sup>

Not until mid-February would Paul speak again in the Chamber. Traveling throughout France, he felt welcomed by workers, whose enthusiasm made up for his poor reception in the Palais Bourbon. Whether compensating or not, he maintained this furious schedule for several months: he spoke at Saint-Nazaire, debated at Bordeaux, and lectured in Rouen. Préfecture agents commented that "the man is untiring."<sup>13</sup> He returned December 23 from speaking in Lille, Armentières, Roubaix, Tourcoing, Boulogne, and Calais, only to depart three days later for Lyons, Givors, Tarare, Thizy, Cours, and Roanne. Laura described him as the "wandering Jew . . . speechifying" and herself as "eternally packing and unpacking." Writing to Liebknecht early in March, she confessed, "I am in ignorance of Paul's whereabouts, but he is somewhere between Lyons, Montpellier, and Marseilles. Unhappily he has not thus far acquired the art of living in three places at once." Lafargue wanted her to accompany him, but without a rail pass and with mounting expenses, this proved impossible. Apparently the couple received countless letters from "poor folks" begging for help. Lafargue was paying the fine imposed by the Douai court by monthly installments, contributing eighty francs a month to the party publishing operation in Lille, and giving about the same amount to Guesde, then in dire economic straits—not to mention additional money to Culine and his family and "innumerable and unavoidable contributions for fines, meetings, *tombolas* [lottery drawings] and what not!" In addition, Laura had sent fifty pounds to Freddy Demuth, Marx's illegitimate son, whose wife had run away with his money, including a fund he was holding for his fellow workers.<sup>14</sup>

The Parti Ouvrier planned to compete actively in the forthcoming municipal elections. Previously, and in contrast to the anarchists, it called for use of the ballot box, but primarily as a means of propaganda and education. Now the party aspired to win seats for legislative purposes as well. There had been signs of revival in socialist fortunes, conceivably preconditions of political success. There was a mild upswing in the economy after 1887 and a renewal of labor demonstrations: workers marched for the eight-hour workday in 1889 and celebrated the first May Day the following year. The number of trade



union members was to triple in the five years beginning in 1890, while the founding of the Second International in 1889 encouraged political regrouping, as had Lafargue's election to parliament in 1891.

Precisely because it was a revolutionary party, the Workers Party would make use of every legal weapon available to it. After having repeatedly elected "capitalists and the hirelings of capitalists to govern them, shoot them, and imprison them," Lafargue editorialized, workers would be given the opportunity to vote "for workers like themselves or socialists known to defend the cause of labor against capital." This political initiation of the proletariat would permit the transformation of universal suffrage "from the instrument of deception it has been to an instrument of emancipation."<sup>15</sup> Accordingly, to make the party program more attractive to potential voters, delegates to the Lyons Congress in late November 1891 asked for school lunches, the abolition of taxes on food, and legislation controlling rent and providing for free medical services, in addition to the eight-hour workday and a minimum wage.<sup>16</sup>

Guesde denied that municipal power alone, inasmuch as it was subordinated to prefectural power, could bring about a socialist society (precisely what distinguished Guesdists from Broussists). But socialist city halls, the Parti Ouvrier executive wrote, could constitute "bases of operation" for future battles; the reforms pushed through by the POF would constitute "propaganda by the deed" in the best sense of the word; and election campaigns could unite working France under one flag, as "a disciplined army."<sup>17</sup>

Accordingly, the party unleashed all its forces to prepare for the elections. Mandated by its executive, Lafargue by mid-April had spoken in forty-one cities in the four and a half months since the Lyons Congress. A scarcity of personnel and a shortage of funds limited what could be done. Still, in Calais party members verified voter registration lists and delivered copies of the POF Program to workers' homes. In Bordeaux, an information office was opened as part of an effort to increase voter registration. The party intensified its attacks on anarchists, confused with collectivists in the minds of many voters, and denounced their acts of arson and terror. It began making overtures to other left-wing groups, even though bourgeois, in various regions and localities. In such towns as Béziers and La Ciotat, collectivists ran on joint lists with liberals, downplaying their socialist affiliation and simply adding some clauses from the Lyons program (without identifying the source) to the Radical program.<sup>18</sup>

Lafargue stepped up an already strenuous pace: every weekend and often into the following week throughout the remainder of 1892 when in such cities as Nantes, Bordeaux, and Toulouse he expounded on the party's newly formulated municipal program. In Brittany, Catholics who came to hear him were startled by his repudiation of Christian socialism. In the small industrial city of Treignac (in the Corrèze Department in southern France), large crowds came on a Sunday to hear him speak on the importance of union organization—which Lafargue called the economic equivalent of socialist political organization. Two days later he was at Nantes, lecturing on the “social power of the working class.” The day after that he left for Bordeaux to give a series of speeches with Guesde. Then he was off to Toulouse.<sup>19</sup>

In early February, a crowd at Lille heard him attack the new tariff on grain and promise to submit legislation abolishing it. Two days later, in the Chamber of Deputies, he did so; in defense of his measure, he said that all-out protectionism did not aid most landowners, who were too small to profit from it. He pointed to lower prices in free-trade England to show the inflationary effects of tariffs in France, but saw the bill defeated.<sup>20</sup> In spite of his heavy speaking schedule and (less onerous) participation in the Chamber, Lafargue still contributed two or three articles a month to *Le Socialiste*. The issue of July 10 carried the first of his series on “Communism and Economic Evolution,” designed to demonstrate the contradiction he saw between the mounting socialization of the productive process and the retention of individual ownership. Engels, while pleased with the separation bill (one of the best, he said), now began to wonder about the effects of so much traveling and speaking on Lafargue's physical—and political—health. He was also concerned by Lafargue's attempts to establish ties with the Blanquist-Boulangists, such as Granger, in the Chamber. They had shown themselves to be unreliable when their chauvinism drove them to Boulanger; in the next election they were likely to be defeated, inasmuch as they had campaigned under false pretenses, and “it was not worth our while to identify with them.”<sup>21</sup>

The Parti Ouvrier's decision to become more involved in the electoral process in general, and Lafargue's many attempts to speak on behalf of collectivist candidates in particular, proved remarkably successful, and the municipal elections of May 1892 foreshadowed the legislative gains of 1893. Four municipalities returned a socialist majority, and 150 others returned minorities strong enough, with Radical support, to elect sympathetic mayors.<sup>22</sup>

With candidates in almost eighty communes on single and joint lists, Guesdists gained more than six hundred council seats and working control of twenty-two municipal governments, including majorities in Montluçon, Roubaix, and Caudry, and retained control in Commentry and Narbonne (although they lost Cette). Even though the National Council inflated the figures to show a higher count of POF voters, success was undeniable. With about sixty thousand votes, the party tripled the number it had received in 1888. It was intoxicated by victory, and the executive's declaration of May 12 hailed the election figures as "the greatest success ever won in France by socialism organized as a political party" and proclaimed the opening of "a new era." Lafargue attributed socialist victories to the existence of communist ideas "in a latent state in the minds of workers," requiring only that propagandists "wake them and put them into action." No less enthusiastic, Guesde recalled Marx's words that "the song of the Gallic cock will raise a new dawn," and added that "the most difficult is accomplished . . . the rest will follow, and soon."<sup>23</sup> Cantonal elections of July 31 and August 7 confirmed the municipal results. Financially exhausted, the party was forced to make an *économie de munitions* and run candidates only in selected regions. Nonetheless, the Parti Ouvrier, already looking forward to next year's national legislative elections, sent thirteen collectivists to general councils. Although unsuccessful in their attempt, Paul and Guesde redoubled efforts to secure adequate funding to publish *Le Socialiste* as a daily, with Guesde as political editor and Lafargue as literary editor. After a thankless decade of preparation, the POF had managed to transform itself. It was becoming an electoral force, and a period of expansion had begun.<sup>24</sup>

Although never repudiating revolution, Engels had long distrusted wholesale reliance on it and could never understand the refusal to take advantage of the weapons made available by universal suffrage. Seven years earlier he had written Vera Zasulich: "People who imagined they had 'made' a revolution saw next day that they did not know what they were doing, and that the revolution they had made was nothing like the one they wanted to make."<sup>25</sup> Now gratified by the success in both Germany and France of a strategy he had long advocated, Engels gave some of the credit to Lafargue's speaking tours. "Do you realize now," he wrote to Lafargue on November 12, "what a splendid weapon you in France have had in your hands for forty years in universal suffrage; if only people had known how to use it! It's

slower and more boring than the call to revolution, but it's ten times more sure, and what is even better, it indicates with the most perfect accuracy the day when a call to armed revolution has to be made; it's even ten to one that universal suffrage, intelligently used by the workers, will drive the rulers to overthrow legality, that is, to put us in the most favorable position to make the revolution." And when the 1893 elections pointed to "a score of Socialists in the Chamber," he accurately predicted a union among socialists of different shades of opinion (but one necessarily dominated by Marxists). Indeed, Engels was convinced that socialists must of necessity rely on universal suffrage if for no other reason than that of self-preservation: he had read of ammunition that exploded on contact (the first melanite bullets and shells); and hence, "if the military fight, resistance becomes madness . . . the era of barricades and street fighting has gone for good."<sup>26</sup>

Flushed with success, the party executive began to prepare for the following year's legislative elections. Belief in a reformist strategy seemed entirely justified. Guesdists hoped to enter the Palais Bourbon as an avant-garde with a mandate to combine political action and methodical propaganda throughout the country. But to achieve their goals, their base had to widen. Previously, Lafargue argued, collectivists had concentrated on urban workers. Now, in the aftermath of the municipal elections, they had to expand their appeal: "at the side of the workers in ateliers whom we have largely won over, the party must reach out to workers on the land."<sup>27</sup> In the Nord, the Parti Ouvrier enrolled as members formerly independent socialists and Radicals and so successfully prevented more moderate socialists from establishing a rival party. Lafargue was aware that the new policy risked the loss of revolutionary fervor, but as both he and Laura assured Engels, an alliance could bring crucial votes from workers and petty bourgeois still fearful of the word "socialism."<sup>28</sup> The formulation of an agricultural program was to complement the party's general program, and here Lafargue would play a key role.

With aspirations of becoming a national political party, the POF began to experience a different kind of problem, one that would rebound in the future: that of maintaining its commitment to internationalism in the face of widespread patriotic sentiment, still exacerbated by the loss to Germany of Alsace and Lorraine. Sensitive to attacks on their patriotism, Guesdists were understandably defensive. A decade earlier Guesde had written that proletarians had no country, a view reinforced during the Boulanger episode, and he had insisted

that reality lay in social classes rather than in nation states.<sup>29</sup> With regard to Alsace and Lorraine, the party was on record that the question of the lost provinces would be resolved only with the triumph of internationalism, and that, in turn, would be achieved with the triumph of socialism in the two countries.<sup>30</sup> There was to be no war of revanche. Lafargue had written in 1891 that so long as capitalist society endured, Alsace would remain part of Germany and that “proletarian blood” would be spilled only in defense of proletarian causes. The refusal to see France forced into a conflict not of her own making was one of the arguments put forward by the Parti Ouvrier to denounce the Franco-Russian alliance.<sup>31</sup>

Wilhelm Liebknecht attended the Marseilles Congress in September 1892 and spoke on internationalist themes, specifically on Franco-German relations. His widely quoted remarks were interpreted as treasonable by Germans and despicable by the French, who resented his very presence. The episode reopened the question of Lafargue’s fitness to serve as deputy.<sup>32</sup> The outraged Chamber demanded—and secured—Liebknecht’s expulsion from France. The Boulangist deputy from the Nord, Lucien Millevoye, asked the government whether in the future it planned to tolerate foreigners coming to France “to excite hatred.” Then with the striking Carmaux miners and speaking in Bordeaux and Toulouse, Lafargue was not present to reply but indicated he would return to ask the Chamber to repudiate Millevoye’s remarks.<sup>33</sup>

Worried that Paul’s repeated and lengthy absences from parliamentary sessions threatened the loss of his seat, Engels sent some material on the SPD’s behavior during the Franco-Prussian War, specifically a party manifesto issued in 1870 and two addresses prepared by the International’s General Council the same year, for him to use in the debate. These documents showed that many Germans, particularly Social Democrats, were not in favor of annexation. He told Laura that her husband should forget his first failures, and that “if he is wise, will attend the Palais-Bourbon assiduously during this last session of the present parliament. I have a notion the electors want to see and hear something of the parliamentary activity of their deputy.” Lafargue admitted he had not spent enough time in the Chamber, although, coincidentally, on the same day he got Engels’s letter and documents he spoke twice on a motion to set up arbitration committees to resolve labor disputes.<sup>34</sup>

Yet on the very day of the debate on the Millevoye proposal (Octo-

ber 28), he was again back in Carmaux, where the miners had (initially) rejected an arbitrated settlement of their bitter and prolonged strike.<sup>35</sup> Millevoye had promised, or so Lafargue believed, to await Paul's return before speaking again on the "Liebknecht question." But he had not waited, and again missing the debate, Lafargue could not reply. The German socialists were angered by his failure to do so, and Engels was astonished at Lafargue's naïveté: "He has still to learn," he wrote Bebel, "that with bourgeois politicians a promise is given only that it could be broken." Lafargue was forced to publish his material as the alternative to Chamber debate. The brochure he compiled with the material sent by Engels and with Guesde's help, *La Démocratie socialiste allemande devant l'histoire*, contrasted "the Germany of the Wilhelms and Bismarcks," which had besieged and bombarded Paris and had taken Alsace and Lorraine, with "the Germany of the Bebels and Liebknechts," socialists who had refused to vote credits to support a war against a French republic and who had protested against the annexation of the two provinces. It was with this Germany that France's working class fraternized at international labor and socialist congresses. But for Engels, the publication of a pamphlet was not nearly as effective as a parliamentary speech, as "our Berlin people" well knew.<sup>36</sup>

The disclosure of the Panama scandals convinced Engels that it was "the beginning of the end" of the bourgeois republic and its politicians, who could scarcely survive such "unparalleled exposure." He admitted to having visions of an uprising in France leading either to a monarchy, to Boulangism, or to socialism, with the first two necessarily leading to the third. "What a basis of operations for a socialistic campaign!" he marveled, and most important, it would speed up the process in Germany. In view of these unending revelations, Engels believed it was all the more necessary for Lafargue to remain in Paris, at "the center of the news," and to use as a weapon each new day's revelation.<sup>37</sup>

For Lafargue, however, Panama lacked any revolutionary potential. The German socialists' call for a stepped-up assault in the Chamber showed they did not understand its consequences. Such an assault would necessarily bring socialists and the right (monarchists and Boulangists) together, since it was they who had launched the attack. We cannot join with the right, he said; it is necessary to wait, for if we show the scandals as a necessary concomitant of capitalism, we will be charged with whitewashing the guilty parties. Criticizing Engels's view

and the latter's implicit wish that he speak out in parliament, Lafargue told him bluntly—and uncharacteristically: “one would have to be an imbecile to believe Paris is in an uproar and on the eve of revolution.”<sup>38</sup> Still, he admitted that disgust with corruption raised hopes for winning middle-class votes.

Lafargue repeated these views in newspaper articles and subsequent letters. The scandal, he said, had left the population at large unconcerned. The man in the street was interested but unaffected: he did not hold the Republic responsible for Panama, and there were no public demonstrations of protest. Even so, he assured Engels, socialists were not inactive and would not permit reactionaries to exploit them and lead a protest. When the latter held a closed meeting in a hall on the avenue Wagram to claim credit for uncovering corruption, Guesdists secured an invitation and reproduced it, and five hundred uninvited guests attended and disrupted events. Far more useful than parliamentary speeches were meetings and demonstrations, and Lafargue, together with Guesde, was working to unite the different socialist groups. He described an agreement signed by left-wing Radicals, revolutionaries, and Boulangists establishing an understanding between them and socialists. At a unity meeting held in the Tivoli Vauxhall, more than six thousand had attended, leaving “thousands more outside.”<sup>39</sup>

Reflecting the perplexity felt by the German socialists, Engels continued to show displeasure with Lafargue's prolonged silence in the Chamber. Laura explained that the socialist group of deputies preferred that he not speak for fear of creating a diversion in favor of the government, but they left Paul “greatly put out” when Jaurès and Millerand were permitted to put in “a word of mild socialism and a remonstrance.” (In the debate of February 9, Jaurès argued that only the application of socialist policy could put an end to the scandals, which themselves were the necessary outgrowth of the capitalist system, and he and Millerand tabled a resolution to that effect.)<sup>40</sup>

Engels's unhappiness showed no signs of abating. “And why in the name of goodness *does* he travel so much? Nobody outside of France can make it out that he and others allow this splendid opportunity to slip out of their hands.” That other socialist deputies feared he would be uncontrollable if he spoke “is from our point of view . . . the very reason why he *should* speak.”<sup>41</sup> Lafargue continued to believe that Panama held no revolutionary potential, and his speech to the Chamber, given in mid-February 1893, supposedly over the scandal, con-

sisted of an impersonal lecture on capitalist production and on the role of banks and financiers within it. His purpose, of course, was to show the scandal as an inevitable consequence of capitalism, and *Le Socialiste* asserted that Lafargue's was the first real socialist intervention on Panama. But as Lafargue himself admitted, the deputies and the non-socialist press (which ignored its content) found it largely irrelevant. "They wanted personal attacks," he complained. Not only Marxist deputies but such sympathizers as Millerand and Jaurès, those "trying to form a party of state socialists with public services," were a "little put-out. But for the time being they need us and we on our side need them; so we get on very well together."<sup>42</sup>

It was also in mid-February that Lafargue submitted legislation that would abolish entry taxes on foodstuffs. He admitted he had earlier contested foreign competition, but tariffs had led to a twenty percent increase in prices and had failed to help the small farmer, who also had to buy commodities. He also called for the establishment of agricultural credit facilities. But most of his parliamentary activity centered on labor relations: he submitted bills that would provide women with maternity leaves and regulate the employment of foreign workers, and participated in debates on the arbitration of labor disputes, concerns that reflected the party's recent expansion of its municipal program.<sup>43</sup>

Even as expectations of personal success raised by her husband's brilliant electoral victory were frustrated, Laura thought of the twenty-fifth wedding anniversary the couple would celebrate the following spring. She hoped the couple could spend it with Engels "at home" and commented on the passing years: "If the days are long at times, the years are terribly short." Paul's health was suffering (he had undisclosed intestinal problems), and their outlook was not improved by a difficult winter, well below freezing, and a flooded cellar that followed a thaw and "a deluge."<sup>44</sup> Their party's loss of the trade unionists affiliated with it would not help matters.

On January 10, 1892, Lafargue spoke at Nantes, where his remarks helped convert to Marxism the labor activist Charles Brunellière. A shipwright and disciple of Malon, Brunellière became friendly with both Lafargue and Guesde and was to become the leading POF organizer in Brittany. Then, before an audience estimated at one thousand, Lafargue spoke at Saint-Nazaire. The striking appearance of the elegant-looking Lafargue, with graying hair and a fine, almost all-white, mustache, contrasted sharply with that of the ravaged-looking, coarsely spoken workers who usually made up his audiences. One



observer described him as possessing the air of having been “left behind by a caravan of immigrants,” and those who expected less from a socialist speaker were surprised by his refined manners. After reminding his audience in vivid terms of what had happened at Fourmies the previous May, Lafargue acknowledged that the minister of interior had secured fifty thousand francs for the victims, but added that “workers’ blood was not to be washed with gold.” The comment evoked an enthusiastic response: the crowd shouted vulgar insults at capitalists and priests. Inasmuch as power was to be won by any means, including the ballot box, Lafargue asked workers to support a class-based list in the forthcoming municipal elections.<sup>45</sup>

A dark, slender, slightly mustached young man with disheveled hair, who identified himself as Aristide Briand, then asked him—and through him the Parti Ouvrier chiefs—to formulate a more precise and carefully thought-out program, one that would justify the party’s demand that workers throw themselves into the struggle against capitalist society. He sought assurance that they and their families would not be subject to reprisals, the loss of their jobs, and resulting starvation. Upset by the interruption, Lafargue replied that Briand was playing “the bourgeois game,” and insisted on the “need to join the battle at once and at all costs,” a rallying cry that brought the crowd to its feet. Afterward, Lafargue said of Briand, whom he suspected of grandstanding, that he “expected nothing good of him.”<sup>46</sup>

In an anonymous account of Lafargue’s speech published in *La Démocratie de l’Ouest* on January 13, doubtless the work of its editor, Fernand Pelloutier (a syndicalist who was suspicious of intellectuals, socialist or otherwise, and whose antiparliamentary stand influenced Briand), the writer criticized Lafargue’s belief that in a socialist society no money would be necessary. He agreed with Lafargue on the goal of radically transforming individual ownership to collective ownership, but only when that was accomplished could any “labor certificates” replace currency then in use. Pelloutier had shown no sympathy for the impetuous Lafargue, and his friend and disciple Briand was predisposed to refute the speaker. Still, Briand’s concern with having the POF develop a solid organization able to provide real guarantees against reprisals aimed at activists appears entirely understandable.<sup>47</sup>

Briand and Lafargue took an instant dislike to each other and would detest one other ever after. When Lafargue learned that although Briand relished his reputation as a radical lawyer he was well connected with the Nantes Préfecture, he found such behavior dupli-

tous. At the POF's Marseilles Congress later that year, Lafargue referred to Briand as "a policeman in Constans' pay" and at a 1900 congress called him "two-faced" and without scruples. Alexandre Zévaès described Lafargue at these gatherings going "through the ranks of the delegates denouncing [Briand] as surrendering to a tiresome task." Pelloutier, too, was ultimately to condemn the ambitious young lawyer, but it was clear that at least initially Lafargue was informed by Brunelière, who was intensely hostile.<sup>48</sup>

Lafargue's most notorious public appearance in 1892 came in the form of a debate with a Bordeaux cleric, the Abbé Naudet, on November 28. The confrontation made news in France and Belgium—some newspapers called it a *joute oratoire*—with excerpts published in the Paris press.<sup>49</sup>

Christian socialism had received enormous impetus from Leo XIII's announced support of the Republic in 1891 and by the almost simultaneous publication of his encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, which although defending private property recognized the legitimacy of working-class grievances. Several churches thereupon sponsored lectures on social questions, and sympathetic priests preached social reform together with an appeal for religious faith. Prayer and political action were the strategies sought by Naudet, who traveled widely and welcomed debate. In 1893 he was to found *La Justice sociale* in Bordeaux, the first Catholic newspaper fully committed to defending workers' causes, and the following year was to scandalize conservatives by supporting a progressive income tax as well as a legal capacity for trade unions. Together with a handful of other priests, he admitted the necessity of democratic reform, albeit under Christian inspiration, and his lectures gained him a popular following. Even so, these priests showed themselves highly critical of revolutionary socialists, Freemasons, and Jews.<sup>50</sup>

According to the moderate *L'Echo du Nord*, some six thousand people, surging, hissing, and applauding, had gathered before the 8:30 P.M. opening at the Lille Hippodrome to hear the debate between Lafargue and Naudet. Lafargue had proposed the arena, provided that the admission charge be limited to one franc or less. Socialists, Catholics, students, and the simply curious came, sitting everywhere or standing on the stairs and in the corridors. The small dark priest, whose bulletlike eyes shone behind his eyeglasses and whose arms were continually in motion, was a skilled debater and contrasted sharply with Lafargue, who spoke in his usual monotonous tone. The

mayor of Lille, M. Fatou, presided, and against cries of "Lafargue," "Naudet," and "Culine," he repeatedly had to call for order.

Lafargue described how he had also been greeted with hisses in the Chamber, "as if [he] carried dynamite." He distinguished socialists from anarchists and denied that religion was an issue: for socialists, the social order was the issue. However much the pope and the Declaration of the Rights of Man might agree on the desirability of private property, Marxism demonstrated that capitalism destroyed individual ownership, as shown by the replacement of small shops by department stores. He cited statistics revealing that wealth was becoming increasingly concentrated, and refused to admit that the expropriators, whose only religion was that of money, consisted solely of Jews. Rather than seize land worked on by individual proprietors, socialists pressed for social legislation, such as that providing state aid to pregnant women.

Naudet defended Christian charity, and when he began to remind his (largely working-class) audience of persecutions conducted by Nero, Julian, and Philip the Fair, Lafargue had to plead for silence so the speaker could be heard. Priests, the abbé assured his hostile listeners, were not on the side of capital; most were workers' children themselves. He agreed the social question was basic; however, the fault lay not in the profit system but in monopolies, and he wondered whether socialists would build schools and churches. The meeting ran well beyond its scheduled limits and broke only at 11:30 P.M. The enthusiasm generated was such that Lafargue and Naudet were to debate on five future occasions.

At Marseilles in September 1892, the trade union federation affiliated with the Parti Ouvrier, the Fédération des Syndicats, held its fifth annual congress. Under Guesdist stimulus, trade union growth had multiplied in the Nord, the Rhône, and the Allier, particularly in textiles and mining. Eight years earlier the party's Paris organization had charged a committee consisting of Guesde, Lafargue, and Georges Crepin (a former Radical converted to collectivism) to report on the means of establishing a trade union federation, and at its 1889 Roubaix Congress, the POF had resolved to study the question.<sup>51</sup>

French trade unions, *syndicats*, grouped workers in the same trade or industry within a particular town or region. Although weak, in the early 1880s they had managed to coalesce into a few national federations of craft unions. Both unions and federations grew in number after legislation in 1884 (the Waldeck-Rousseau law) legalized their

status. Responding to demands for a wider organization, one that would associate all sectors of industry, the Lyons weavers sponsored a congress in 1886; the Fédération des Syndicats et Groupes Corporatives de France that emerged later that year—and was surprisingly ignored or downplayed in histories of the French labor movement—constituted the first national industrial federation of trade unions. Thanks in large measure to the efforts of Jean Dormoy, the secretary of the Fédération in 1887–1888, it fell under Parti Ouvrier control.<sup>52</sup>

As had been the case almost a decade before (at the 1879 Workers' Congress held in Marseilles—*l'immortal congrès*), Guesdists represented small unions that were little more than political fronts, yet won support for a collectivist resolution and for rejecting reliance on state-sponsored reform. They then reshaped the organization into a Fédération des Syndicats (FNS), alleging the need to distinguish authentic workers' unions from company unions in order to promote greater political consciousness among workers and to instill within their members a sense of the class struggle concept. In principle, the FNS was not to associate with any political party. In practice, the Marxist militants within it politicized the unions they controlled, and in some cases party activists such as the textile organizer Victor Renard served as union chiefs. For a historian of French syndicalism, the FNS was "something of a sham": the member unions were small and inactive and the Marxists who ran it showed less interest in the development of labor organizations than in using the congress to demonstrate political strength and provide a platform for political propaganda.<sup>53</sup>

Discussion of the general strike came up at a Fédération congress held in 1888, almost incidentally and in the absence of the Parti Ouvrier leaders; and in a burst of sudden enthusiasm, the delegates voted their approval for it and for workers to break with politicians and concentrate on building their unions. The Guesdists learned their lesson and tightened their control: in 1890 the POF convened its own congress immediately before that of the Fédération to ensure that the party line would be followed. Guesdists redoubled efforts to show up at major strikes over the years: Commentry in 1881, Roanne and Carmaux in 1882, Anzin in 1884, Decazeville in 1886, the Pas-de-Calais in 1889, Roubaix in 1890 and 1892, and Fourmies and Lyons in 1891. The failure of most strikes in the 1880s reinforced the POF's disdain for them, but once unleashed, Guesdists felt obliged to support and help organize them. However, in pushing for political action, they continued to subordinate trade union to political activity, and to see

the unions as providing recruits for the party and as receptacles for its propaganda. The POF rejected as class collaboration any alternative (paternalism, social Catholicism, mutualism, solidarism) to Marxist-run unions. Yet consumer cooperatives formed part of the “counter-culture” in Nord textile towns, and there were periodic outbursts for a Marxist-based mutualism. A decade earlier Lafargue himself had written that cooperatives showed the superiority of socialist solidarity over individual autonomy: they established collectivist institutions “in the heart of bourgeois society” and implanted collectivist values in the face of bourgeois hegemony.<sup>54</sup>

The appearance of Guesde, Lafargue, and Liebknecht clearly strengthened the collectivists at the Fédération’s Marseilles congress. But a tactical error had been made. The union delegates had been allowed to meet in advance; impressed with the oratory of the militant Briand, they voted a resolution favoring the general strike. An old idea, the general strike dated to at least the eighteenth century, when a number of workers in different trades ceased work in support of the Lyons silk workers in 1744. Marx, however, had found it useless when compared to politically effective working-class action.<sup>55</sup> Initially, the POF had not taken a clear line on the general strike. Commenting on Lafargue’s mention of it in the latter’s Hyde Park speech, Engels dismissed it as a “dream [because] whenever we are in a position to *try* the universal strike, we shall be able to get what we want for the mere asking for it.”<sup>56</sup> Accordingly, at the Lille Congress in 1890, the Parti Ouvrier rejected the general strike on the grounds that it presupposed a socialist and trade union majority (although as a concession to union militants, the Congress distinguished between a total cessation of work in a particular firm and a revolutionary general strike). Now at Marseilles, Lafargue and Guesde once more denounced the general strike as “a dangerous dream” but could not stop the vote in favor of it.<sup>57</sup>

Thus it was that the general strike strategy had been fought and repudiated by the Marxists before they began losing control of their labor organization in 1892. The party congress that year, meeting after the Fédération, passed over the question in silence. It was clear that a split was imminent, not within the Parti Ouvrier, which was too well organized, but between the party and the trade union federation. The struggle would continue until 1894, when Guesde and Lafargue would surrender and withdraw.

In fact, there was also a split within the Fédération. Faith in the

trade union and its potential for economic activity had received new impetus when the Paris Municipal Council set up the first Bourse du Travail (Labor Exchange) in 1887. The *bourses*, another kind of workers' organization, were locally based, bringing workers in different and unrelated sectors together for mutual aid, education, and propaganda. In function and membership they overlapped the *syndicats*; they similarly rejected political ties, and often dominated by anarchists, they proved fertile ground for syndicalist thought.<sup>58</sup> By 1892 ten such *bourses* founded a national organization, the Fédération Nationale des Bourses du Travail, which soon rivaled the Guesdist federation of unions. In contrast to the FNS, the Fédération des Bourses was well organized and (at least initially) subsidized by municipalities. At the forthcoming Nantes labor congress in 1894, the Fédération des Bourses planned to propose a merger of the two labor organizations.

Aware of the danger, and to coordinate a common strategy, the Parti Ouvrier held its annual congress in Nantes first. The Guesdists again categorically rejected the general strike and insisted that only political action could achieve working-class emancipation. "To prepare a general strike," the delegates resolved, "would lead the proletariat to a dead end, divide it between strikers and non-strikers, immobilize it and organize its own defeat. Only in the political arena is the proletariat, given their numbers, the equal of, even superior to, the capitalists." But because the following week's labor congress was open to delegates not only from POF-dominated unions but from others as well, the Nantes gathering proved tumultuous. In another persuasive speech, Briand recalled the general strike resolution adopted at the Marseilles labor congress and cited the successful example of Belgian strikes. If well prepared, they would succeed and accustom workers to see the strike as a social as well as an economic weapon, to supplement and not necessarily replace political action.<sup>59</sup>

After three days of heated debate, the principle of the general strike was accepted by an even larger majority than that achieved at Marseilles. When blows were exchanged on the afternoon of December 21, the defeated Guesdist minority found a pretext to walk out. Their FNS was hopelessly split, and the small Guesdist faction held its own congress (in 1895 at Troyes) to vote against the strike, repudiating the Nantes resolution. But the Guesdist trade union federation now had no more than a nominal existence; it convoked no more congresses and, because of its emphasis on politics, soon passed from the scene. In 1895 the victorious majority was to found a new organiza-

tion, the Confédération Générale du Travail, which reaffirmed the general strike and asked workers to vote only for trade unionists at election time. It was not wholly revolutionary, but similar to the Fédération des Bourses du Travail, it was dedicated to working-class action and was to turn French labor away from politics and back to economic organization as the means by which workers were to defend their interests. The Fédération des Bourses would ultimately merge with the Confédération, but even before this it was clear that the labor movement had distanced itself from political organizations theoretically committed to its preservation and growth.<sup>60</sup>

Why had the Marxists lost control of their affiliated labor organization? Much of the explanation is structural and cannot be dealt with here. However, other and more historical reasons explain the continued popularity of economic over political action on the part of French workers. The antiparlamentarianism taught by Proudhon, and strengthened by the political “betrayals” of 1848 and 1871, was reinforced by the attitude taken toward organized labor by the Marxists. Guesde’s and Lafargue’s elemental Marxism persuaded the Parti Ouvrier to place all emphasis on politics and reject economic alternatives. The POF gave unionism a secondary role, making it, as Willard put it, “a simple appendage of a revolutionary socialism.” The conflict erupted between 1890 and 1894 over the theme of the general strike, the myth held by libertarians in the labor movement that flew in the face of the progressive conquest of public power.<sup>61</sup> For syndicalists, the growing commitment to moderation by the Parti Ouvrier appeared as proof that politicians wanted labor’s support but would do little on its behalf. It appeared wiser to rely on the union, the *syndicat*, and on its ability to make use of the most effective weapon available to labor, the strike. A strike at a single factory or mill was a revolutionary act; how much more revolutionary a general stoppage of work! It would sound the knell for capitalist society and force it to seek terms. The POF fought these ideas as irrational and romantic, and the precedent was set for the party and the unions to go their separate ways.

But all of this took place later. Almost immediately after the Marseilles labor congress had come to an end, that of the Parti Ouvrier opened as scheduled. Guesde and Lafargue were overwhelmed with work for the next four days. Sessions opened at nine in the morning and did not close until midnight, with only two intervals for meals. The two men were involved in drafting every resolution and participated in every debate, even attending the meetings held by a discipli-

nary committee to settle differences. Because of the southern location and because the gathering was open to groups not yet affiliated with the POF but that accepted its program, there was an increased representation of agricultural districts. The party leaders praised the intelligence of the new recruits, who spoke for small farmers and rural laborers (in part, perhaps, because these newcomers had overwhelmingly voted to defeat the proposal favoring the general strike). This, plus the acceptance of the agricultural program he had drafted, encouraged Lafargue to describe the congress as “the most important ever held in France.”<sup>62</sup>

He spoke on behalf of the executive council in his capacity as liaison with foreign groups. But it was Lafargue’s concern with agrarian policy that gave rise to his most important achievement: on the fourth and last day, he proposed major revisions in those planks of the party’s platform concerned with agriculture, although it would require two years for the changes to take definitive shape. The turn to reform by the Parti Ouvrier, orthodox defenders of the Marxist faith in the 1880s, was both triggered and reinforced by Lafargue’s agrarian program and by his party’s resentment of German socialists who criticized it.



## 8 Peasants and Patriots

Lafargue had long interested himself in agriculture and had published numerous articles in *Le Socialiste* on the subject. In the 1860s, he had been struck by the insistence of the Bordelais on dividing their already limited property into small plots in order to widen the variety of crops and assure a supply of wood. He told this to the readers of an English journal in 1884 and added that small landownership was made possible by “a feudal-type social organization and [that] a bourgeois social system made peasant proprietorship increasingly anachronistic, increasingly subject to destruction by capitalist production.” Moreover, in a growing industrialized society, farmers were strapped for cash to pay taxes, lawyers’ fees, and interest; consequently, they had to hire themselves out to work part time for others or in industry. Capitalist concentration was taking place on the land as well as in industry. Yet France was still an agrarian country; the Commune fell, in part, because it had fought alone, and so the need for the farmers’ vote was vital. Socialist propaganda, he concluded, must reach out to these small farmers.<sup>1</sup> And, insofar as his party was to be a mass party, in contrast to the cadre party that could depend on elites for its electoral support, the votes of such a large proportion of the electorate were indeed vital.

Regardless of what Blanc and Michelet wrote, he went on, the French Revolution had not benefited the peasant; rather it had stripped him of the rights enjoyed in feudal society, rights denied when landed ownership assumed a bourgeois form. “It is with a view to speeding up this inevitable event [the disappearance of the small landowner] that many large proprietors and most professors of agriculture openly demand free trade in agricultural products.” The Social Democratic Federation in England appeared impressed by this analysis, and to Engels’s amusement its newspaper, *Justice*, called Lafargue “the first living authority on peasant property.”<sup>2</sup>

Lafargue had long thought of exempting from collectivization land

individually farmed by its owner. He was aware that the congresses of the First International had debated the issue. Pointing to the many small farmers in their countries, a number of delegates, particularly those from France and Italy, had rejected Marx's assertion (in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* and *Capital*) that the peasant was doomed. Rejected, too, were the cry (in the *Communist Manifesto*) for the "expropriation of the land and the use of the rent for State needs" and the belief on which it was based: that it was inevitable and economically desirable that small, inefficiently used property should disappear.

However, in his conspectus of Bakunin's *State and Anarchy* (1874–1875), Marx acknowledged that on taking control of the government and using it to complete the removal or the transformation of capitalism, the proletariat must "take the measures needed to enable the peasant to directly improve his condition, i.e., to win him over to the revolution . . . it is important not to antagonize the peasant, e.g., by proclaiming the abolition of the right of inheritance or the abolition of his property; the latter is possible only when the capitalist tenant farmer has ousted the peasants, so that the actual farmer is as much a proletarian, a wage-earner, as the urban worker."<sup>3</sup> Even so, Marxist delegates to the congresses of the First International supported the expropriation of privately held land over the opposition of Proudhonists. The Basel Congress of 1869 had voted for collectivization, although the Belgian typographer César de Paepe had proposed that individual owners be allowed to work the land for their lifetimes if they so chose. Objections to individual ownership had been overcome at the 1879 French Labor Congress, when a collectivist majority argued that arable land was the product of generations and belonged to all their descendants.

In 1878 a Guesdist manifesto laid stress on the hardships suffered by peasants and the petite bourgeoisie, both exploited by finance capitalism and unfair taxation, and so created possible recruits to a socialist party that appealed to their sense of grievance and frustration. But in his *Collectivisme et Révolution*, published the following year, Guesde anticipated "the swift and inevitable disappearance of petty proprietors in the face of capitalist encroachments," and the 1880 program accepted by the Havre Congress called for the collective ownership of land, mines, and farm machinery "as quickly as possible."<sup>4</sup>

However, in the October 7, 1881, issue of *L'Egalité*, Deville wrote

that "scientific socialism does not pretend to move faster than the facts permit. It never spoke of the suppression of peasant ownership . . . Wherever labor and capital were found together in the same hands [there] is no place for confiscation." And in his report to the Roanne countercongress in 1882, Lafargue, once more taking issue with Guesde, had shown concern for the plight of small landowners; he noted how they were forced out by large estate owners and how the government, far from helping, added to their misery by increasing taxes. In the February 12, 1882, issue of *L'Egalité*, Lafargue wrote that it would be "madness" to speak of nationalizing "the small weaver's loom, the boatman's vessel, or the peasant proprietor's land." Rather than frighten the peasant with the threat of expropriation, the party must try to win them over to the revolution, and the newspaper suggested the abolition of debts and taxes, and the nationalization only of land not cultivated by its owners.<sup>5</sup> Lafargue's influence was such that by 1884, at its Roubaix Congress, the Parti Ouvrier took an ambiguous stand. Although favoring the gradual collectivization of land and such agrarian reforms as the annulment of all nonmortgage debts, the return to the collectivity of half of all mortgage payments, and the abolition of taxes on land, delegates also distinguished between owners seen as capitalists and small owners who worked on their land. The significance of this was not seen at the time.<sup>6</sup> In any event, for the next eight years, until the successful showing in the municipal elections of 1892, Guesdists placed emphasis on winning the support of urban workers at the expense of an agricultural program.

Seven years after Roubaix, Lafargue was saying (rightly) that France's economy was still an agrarian one (forty-seven percent of the labor force at the end of the century worked on farms), and consequently the POF needed to win the farmers' votes.<sup>7</sup> In a preface to Adéodat Compère-Morel's *Les Propos d'un rural*, a book on agriculture published by the party member who specialized in the subject, Lafargue acknowledged that socialist propaganda had concentrated on the cities, and understandably so. But recognition that agriculture prevailed in the France of the 1890s made him all the more aware of the need to enlarge the party's base.<sup>8</sup>

Most important POF strongholds lay in the Nord and Pas-de-Calais Departments, and in the center of the country, especially in the Allier and (secondarily) in the Rhône, Loire, and Isère Departments. However, according to their historian, the Guesdists were also develop-

ing strong positions in the Midi, especially the Mediterranean and Languedocian south, and peasants accounted for almost nine percent of party membership between 1890 and 1893. The census statistics published in 1892 confirmed those of a decade earlier; they demonstrated that peasant ownership was not disappearing. It is also true that rival socialist factions, newcomers like Jaurès, and the new Bourses du Travail were competing with Marxists for the support of small farmers.<sup>9</sup> Ten years earlier the Parti Ouvrier ran campaigns based on agrarian reform in those rural areas adjoining towns where the party had organized sectional groups. Before the election of 1889, Lafargue had lectured in Rheims and Epernay, where he met several small winegrowers. They had been ruined, he learned, by adjacent estate owners whose acacias and artichokes created shade and roots that spoiled the vines.<sup>10</sup> The point is that by the late 1880s Lafargue was already grappling with the need to win over a conservative peasantry to collectivism.

He was also aware that the agrarian crisis that was devastating the western European peasantry in the early 1890s raised a critical question for socialists: how to respond to the depression that began twenty years before and showed no signs of coming to an end. In addition, the great increases in cheap grain exports from the United States and South America made the plight of the small farmers unbearable. And developments in agricultural technology—for example, the steam harvester—in the past decade or two threatened small farmers, similar to the way that factory growth threatened artisans. The peasant feared he would be crushed at his plow just as the cottager at his spinning wheel had been crushed by the mill. He was fighting to keep his land. Finally, like most socialists, Lafargue was always interested in winning recruits, and his party would be among the first to establish an agricultural program.

Early in 1892 the POF sent a questionnaire to farmers with ties to the party and invited them to its Marseilles Congress scheduled for September—the location having been selected precisely because of the emphasis to be placed on agricultural questions. A committee composed of Lafargue, Guesde, and several delegates from rural districts used the replies—and advice—received to formulate a draft agrarian program. The delegates to the Marseilles Congress accepted the draft program, although it would not be completed until the 1894 Nantes Congress.<sup>11</sup> In a newspaper article explaining the program, Lafargue complained that propaganda in the countryside was timid and limited

to villages. If, in the city, questions of salary and working conditions predominated, in the countryside those of landed interests, tenant contracts, interest rate increases, and day wage levels all took precedence. Socialism, he concluded, must show it could also reply to the needs of these people.<sup>12</sup>

In a pamphlet-length defense of the agrarian program published by the party press in Lille, Lafargue pointed to the high degree of centralization that justified the return of the instruments of production to the producers, themselves workers, and required that the return could take place only in a collective or social form. A factory, for example, was no longer owned by those who worked in it, but could be owned by them collectively. However, this was not the case in agriculture, where the soil, the means of productivity, was in large measure still possessed by the producers themselves. Once in office, moreover, socialists could aid the small landowner by suppressing taxes, abolishing debts, and extending credit, but not by taking his land. For Lafargue, "the peasant works with the small field, as does the carpenter with the plane and the surgeon the lancet." Inasmuch as none of these producers exploit others, they should not fear the loss of their instruments of labor in a socialist revolution.<sup>13</sup>

Having the forthcoming 1893 legislative election in mind and casting the Parti Ouvrier as the savior of the smallholder, Lafargue warned the delegates at Marseilles that the task of socialism was not to precipitate the disappearance of peasant ownership, "not to separate property and labor but on the contrary to join them in the same hands," not to create more misery but to eliminate that which remained. As with mines and factories, large estates would return to the agricultural proletariat in collectivized form. But small farmers would keep their plots and so have their individual ownership protected. The program also provided benefits for agricultural laborers, sharecroppers, and tenant farmers, whose class consciousness would subsequently be raised.<sup>14</sup>

He additionally asked that a number of demands be included in the party's agrarian program: a minimum salary for agricultural labor, local arbitration councils (*conseils de prud'hommes*) of farm workers and employers, communally owned lands, agricultural pensions and sickness insurance, free medical and pharmaceutical services, communally owned machinery available for rent, an end to indirect taxes and all taxes on incomes less than three thousand francs, an end to tariffs on farm machinery, farm family indemnification should sons be

drafted into the army, public works projects to improve the soil, free agronomy courses, experimental stations, and hunting and fishing rights. All these demands were ultimately adopted into the program.

Despite the establishment of a republic and universal suffrage, "feudalism," Lafargue argued, still prevailed in the countryside. Debt-ridden small farmers could not compete with large landowners using machinery; 24,000 such landowners held half the nation's farmland, while seven million small shareowners held all the rest. And a statistical study published by the government in 1892 indeed showed only minor reductions in the numbers who worked on the land—and these included sharecroppers and farmers who worked for other farmers. The number of smallholders who cultivated their own property had actually increased, and almost sixty percent of the population lived in rural areas as late as 1906. He told the delegates to stop deceiving themselves, to elect deputies who would serve them, and to begin by reading the POF agricultural program. In his pamphlet, he referred to his efforts in the area of industrial legislation and insisted the time had come to turn to farm legislation. The 1789 Revolution made individually owned farms possible, but much of the land still had to be returned to the peasant.<sup>15</sup>

Convinced that the agrarian program would be welcomed by farmers, party leaders at the Nantes Congress two years later enacted an even more far-reaching version. The details of the Nantes program, which repeated and enlarged upon themes advanced at Marseilles, are unimportant today: the point was the wish to preserve the small-scale farmer even though Marxist doctrine predicted his extinction, as it had that of the urban craftsman.<sup>16</sup> The POF chiefs doubtless appreciated the fact that in a by-election in January 1893, voters in the second electoral district of the Tarn Department reelected Jean Jaurès to the Chamber of Deputies, an election that signified the penetration of socialism into a basically rural area. Although he had been the champion of the Carmaux miners, Jaurès in his first term had worked to ensure that the benefits of the proposed agricultural tariff reached small owners, tenants, and farmhands. When in his letter of appreciation to his constituents he pointedly affirmed socialism's "friendship to those who until now ignored or feared it," Jaurès recognized the debt he owed farmers for his election. Together with independent socialists, he would champion the cause of small farmers and shape the position of a united socialist party toward them.<sup>17</sup>

Orthodox Marxists wished to avoid the question of how the party

could urge reforms under capitalism, that is, how to win elections and yet remain revolutionary. They could argue that while working-class legislation would benefit the proletariat, measures to save the small farmer impeded the technological progress that alone, as Marx said, guaranteed the victory of socialism. The perpetuation of small holdings, for example, prevented the introduction of efficient agricultural technology, such as mechanical reapers. (It is also true that the prospect of small individually owned farms prospering under socialism owed more to Proudhon than to Marx.) And Lafargue's stand led to yet another major disagreement with Engels.

Engels showed surprise that socialist parties in both France and Germany were putting agrarian questions at the top of their agendas. He could appreciate that Marxists in the two countries were attempting to come to terms with more moderate socialist elements, and that in France this was opening a period of cooperation in the 1890s among socialists of different persuasions and between socialists and Radicals. But France was perceived as an agricultural country with few hopes of industrializing rapidly. The question took on greater importance when some German socialists urged similar action. Karl Kautsky and the SPD chiefs were then fighting Georg von Vollmar, a former cavalry officer, who as a socialist deputy in the Bavarian legislature championed gradualness and spoke for the property-conscious Catholic farmers of the region. He fought for socialist support of private peasant ownership but was to see his proposal defeated at the party's 1895 congress. Like Engels, Kautsky believed that the smallholders' mounting indebtedness was leaving them the owners of "phantom property" and that peasants must be made aware that they could not compete with large-scale capitalist farms. Even if by promising the perpetuation of private ownership, socialists could win peasant votes, these small farmers would only desert the party at a decisive moment.<sup>18</sup>

Engels should not have been surprised that French and German Socialists were emphasizing agrarian questions. Aside from Great Britain, Belgium, and parts of Germany, Europe even west of the Elbe was still agrarian, and a reassessment of socialist agricultural policy was only logical if political power was to be won at the polls. But in an important article on "the agrarian question," first published in Kautsky's *Die Neue Zeit* (and later expanded for party journals), Engels played down the concerns of small farmers. Meeting their needs, he argued, would not upset the capitalist order. Socialist agricultural pro-

grams accommodated farmers to win their votes, and consequently he condemned them as opportunistic. From an ideological standpoint, such programs were dangerous, for in asking how to aid the peasant, not as a future proletarian but as today's owner, they violated fundamental socialist principles. They were also futile, because the small farmer acquired his prejudices from his isolated condition; he could not be won over unless socialists made unkeepable promises. For Engels, peasants "who expect us to perpetuate their dwarf property are not acceptable to us as party members." That socialists should undertake reform to protect small farmers from large landowners was thus rejected out of hand.<sup>19</sup>

Engels agreed that although France still possessed small-scale ownership, which was destined to disappear, socialists did not have to speed up the process. Still, he pointed out that in England the small farmer enjoyed neither assured possession of his plot nor his liberty: he and his house belonged to "usurers." "Your attempt," he told Lafargue, "to protect the small peasant in his ownership does not protect his liberty but only the special form of his servitude; it prolongs a situation in which he can neither live nor die." The objective lay in returning the means of production to producers collectively. Just as those who claimed to relieve small farmers by calling for tariffs were really self-interested large landowners, socialists ought not add to the deception by suggesting that small ownership could be saved.<sup>20</sup>

Although in his *Conspectus* Marx had modified this view, Engels and "orthodox" disciples continued to see all forms of large-scale enterprise and concentrated capitalism as necessary stages on the road to socialism. They looked on small enterprises, including family farms, with contempt, as survivals from an earlier epoch destined to disappear in the wake of capitalist growth. Artisans, shopkeepers, small entrepreneurs, and farmers (peasants) who owned small plots and used rudimentary implements would decline and vanish along with other relics of barbarism. Land would then be cultivated by scientific methods yielding the greatest output at the smallest cost. And the dispossessed peasants, having been reduced to the status of proletarians by the industrialization of the countryside by capitalist farming, would now share in the general emancipation that would follow the proletariat's conquest of political power. The French party could not say that small holdings were destined to vanish and then promise peasants continued ownership of them. If it based its strategy on the wish to win the peasant vote, then its strategy was faulty. "We will



never make a socialist out of the peasant who asks us to protect his petty property, anymore than the small employer who wants to remain an employer.”<sup>21</sup>

In 1892 Engels had expressed dissatisfaction but had not blamed the Parti Ouvrier; two years later, when Lafargue definitively proposed at Nantes that all farmers aside from the largest landowners could keep their land, Engels rejected any elaboration of its agrarian program. And when German reformists also tried to win the farmers’ support, he feared that these simultaneous movements would reinforce each other and move socialists down the path of opportunism. Because Lafargue was instrumental in the drive to expand the agrarian program formulated at Marseilles—his report received unanimous approval at the POF’s Nantes Congress—Engels told him frankly that he “leaned a little too much towards the opportunistic tendency [and] came near to sacrificing the future of the party for a momentary triumph.”<sup>22</sup>

Engels’s language to Sorge was more blunt. “On the continent success has developed the appetite for more success, and catching the peasant, in the literal sense of the word, is becoming the fashion.” The French at Nantes, through Lafargue, he went on, say it is not our business to hasten the ruin of the small peasant—which capitalism is seeing to—but also that we must directly protect the peasant against taxation, usury, and landlords, which is both “stupid” and “impossible.” The peasant must be shown that he was doomed under capitalism and that his only salvation lay in association, in working toward collective ownership in which both small landowners and the landless would have a stake. Lafargue’s analysis of the agricultural system, and now his party’s agricultural program, contained a basic contradiction: that capitalism was ruining the small landowner, yet the small landowner needed socialist help.<sup>23</sup> Engels thus rejected Lafargue’s distinction between small owners and “the parasites of big ownership.” He warned against sacrificing the socialist future to ephemeral successes. The concentration of agricultural property, he insisted, leads ineluctably to the disappearance of the small peasant. How socialists could win more voters by threatening expropriation was a question Engels did not address. For Lafargue and the Workers Party, the plight of French peasants, if not addressed by socialists, would be addressed by others.

Writing to her sister, Eleanor revealed that Engels was more upset with what he called Lafargue’s opportunism at Nantes than he told Lafargue. And admittedly Lafargue showed considerable opportu-

ism in such speeches as that to tobacco workers, in which he rejected a tax on tobacco (as on alcohol) as hurting the “little man,” whose “harsh condition of life” he said he “understood.”<sup>24</sup> Proud of their apparently successful appeal to small farmers, Lafargue and other Guesdists resented the criticism and openly showed sympathy for German reformists who held similar beliefs, although two years before *Le Socialiste* had called Vollmar a traitor. Charles Bonnier, a friend of Guesde now teaching French literature at Oxford, recommended neutrality in the struggle between the SPD leadership and “the traitor,” and Guesde and Lafargue accepted the advice. On the other hand, Bonnier asked that Engels and Kautsky, if they rejected the POF’s agricultural program, not simply mouth the principles found in *Capital* and the *Communist Manifesto* but offer “positive” alternatives. And the party’s effort to win over the small farmer, with a single exception, ultimately gained the support of all socialist groups in France.<sup>25</sup>

In retrospect, Engels showed a lack of realism when, in Eric Hobsbawm’s words, he wrote of small peasants and independent artisans “ready to accept the prediction of their disappearance.”<sup>26</sup> The peasantry, we have seen, obstinately refused to die out. Land-ownership was becoming more diffused and not more concentrated as the century neared an end, however much the smallholder’s standard of living was declining because of the competition of large entrepreneurs and the exactions of moneylenders and merchants. If in eastern Europe the semiserf laborer could be treated like an industrial worker, in France (and in such places as southern and western Germany), much agriculture remained in the hands of small farmers. And if reliance on the ballot box became the new strategy for socialists, then how they were to meet the concerns of smallholders became a dilemma. Engels was on a surer footing when concerned with labor movements in industrialized lands: he defended social legislation but opposed measures that would increase the power of the existent state. (Yet paradoxically, in his last years and like Marx, Engels came to esteem the potential of the Russian peasantry and to see the need to keep the support of peasants after a revolution.) For one historian, he was marked by his “youthful conviction” of the “idiocy of rural life” and by his view of peasants as “barbarian survivals or future proletarians” and had already shown poor judgment in his treatment of anarchists and syndicalists in Spain and Italy, whose strength and appeal he underestimated.<sup>27</sup>

The agricultural program formulated at Marseilles and the decision

to permit Guesdists to ally with other left-wing candidates contributed to the POF successes in the municipal elections of 1892. This is why, when several delegates at the Parti Ouvrier's 1893 Paris Congress proposed strengthening the agricultural program, the question was taken up again at the party's Nantes Congress. The aftermath? The peasant program proved to be more campaign rhetoric than the promotion of specific reforms. It was not pushed by Guesdist deputies in the Chamber or in party debates, leaving the field to Jaurès and independent socialists.<sup>28</sup> In Germany, the forces of orthodoxy defeated the proposed agrarian program. There was no need, Kautsky argued, for Social Democrats to base themselves on any class except the proletariat inasmuch as victory was assured. His view prevailed at the SPD's Breslau Congress in 1895, although disgruntled German farmers in the south and west continued their opposition.

The problem for the Guesdists, and much of the explanation for their failure to follow through on their agrarian policy, stemmed from the Parti Ouvrier's efforts to gain a larger share of the urban vote. To further its appeal to urban workers and win over elements of the petite bourgeoisie, the party, in another campaign led by Lafargue, came out against protectionism and thus for lower food prices. He formulated policy, submitted legislation, gave numerous speeches, and published articles on the subject. On February 16, 1892, he upset many within the Chamber of Deputies by using sansculotte language in defense of his bill to abolish tariffs on imported foodstuff. (The title of an article published the previous year on the subject was "Les Affameurs" ["The Starving"].)<sup>29</sup> He denounced profiteers for having "conspired against the stomachs of workers." The language was harsh, but the analysis was superficial. He had not explored the consequences of protectionism on the small and midsize peasantry but had rather dismissed them by saying farmers had not really benefited from tariffs. Aware of the contradiction in its efforts to win the votes of both small farmers and urban workers, the POF did not raise the tariff issue when discussing the agricultural program formulated at Marseilles and would only rarely mention it during the 1893 electoral campaign. Obviously, the Parti Ouvrier, which began in 1892 to orient its propaganda to the countryside, feared losing peasant votes by strongly opposing the protectionism it sought on behalf of urban workers. Its silence, however understandable, damaged chances for the alliance between city and rural workers that Marxists wanted to seal.

Another significant realm in which moderation triumphed in the

name of electoral realism was foreign affairs. The Parti Ouvrier decided to display its patriotism. Even in their Nord stronghold, French socialists—and, we have seen, the Marxist deputy from Lille—particularly because of their opposition to a war for the reconquest of Alsace and Lorraine but also because of their internationalism in general, were denounced as unpatriotic and pro-German. Determined to prove their love of country, especially in the light of closer ties between France and Russia, the Guesdists went on record as denying that patriotism and internationalism were incompatible and as opposing only France's playing any "second fiddle to the tsar."

Both Lafargue's and Guesde's consistent view of war as the natural outcome of bourgeois conflict, and their denunciation of insurrectional means to prevent it, provided ideological cover for the party's tilt toward support of the still secret alliance with tsarist Russia—for socialists long the most reactionary regime in Europe. France was to be defended by its proletariat. By the early 1890s, nationalism was gaining popularity. It was no longer the possession of the left: the Boulangist episode had shown that it had gone beyond its Jacobin origins. Historians argue that a turning point in the history of nationalism in France was reached when the right adopted it in the quarter century after 1889. The right had appropriated doctrines previously associated with the revolutionary left. What marked nationalism "from Sedan to Vichy" was its antimaterialism and its rejection of the eighteenth-century heritage; and in view of its commitment to an electoral strategy, the POF felt all the more constrained to demonstrate national pride.<sup>30</sup>

The National Council of the Workers Party—and Français was now firmly attached to Parti Ouvrier—defined the party's position. To stop the charges hurled against the POF, in June 1893 the executive published a manifesto that reaffirmed the Marxists' sense of patriotism—and their fear of losing votes. Signed by Lafargue, Guesde, and forty others, it stated that "it is a calumny to say that socialists have no country . . . We will not let them translate our glorious cry of 'Long live the International' into the inept yelp of 'Down with France' . . . No! Internationalism is not the degradation or the sacrifice of the country. Nations are the necessary requisite for humanity . . . The historic mission of the French proletariat . . . [requires] a great and strong France." Nationhood, then, was seen as an inevitable stage in human development. In referring to the internationalism of French revolutionaries, the signers declared that "one does not cease to be a patriot

in moving toward internationalism just as one did not cease being Burgundian or Breton in becoming French.” Marxists today join with other socialists in considering the Republic as “the instrument of social transformation.” The right of self-defense extended to nations as well as to workers. “France attacked,” the manifesto concluded, “will have no more ardent defenders than socialists of the Workers Party.”<sup>31</sup>

Campaigning in 1893, socialists found the proposed alliance with Russia a particularly thorny issue. Together with Guesde and Vaillant at the Parti Ouvrier’s 1891 congress, Lafargue had denounced it as a “fraud,” a “peril,” and a “crime.” The tsar only wanted French loans to consolidate his corrupt regime. Peace could scarcely be preserved if France fought wars provoked by him. It was criminal to place a republic alongside Russian despotism: the alliance would only strengthen reactionaries in both countries.

In an article in *Le Socialiste*, Lafargue had called the alliance a “shame for republican France” manufactured by the venal press. Not only was it immoral, but it was impractical in view of the questions raised about Russia’s capacity to fight beyond her borders.<sup>32</sup> In August 1892, he was still denouncing the alliance with the “tsar-murderer” and doubting the sincerity of French patriots who embraced the accord with Russia as a vehicle to get back the lost provinces. They also want France to be the arbiter of Europe, he cried, and it is best for France to remain neutral and not become “a vassal” to Russia. In reality, Alsatians were delighted with their new German markets and were providing competition for German industrialists. Better that France develop her industry elsewhere to restore the balance. In any event, “Alsace-Lorraine would be returned only after a horrible war which would compromise the interests of civilization for twenty years.”<sup>33</sup> Yet within two months, at the time of the POF’s eleventh annual congress, the delegates asked only that a distinction be made between sailors and officers when the Russian fleet arrived at Toulon. *Le XIX<sup>e</sup> Siècle* noted that M. and Mme Lafargue appeared at a ball in Paris to honor the visitors.<sup>34</sup>

The shift in Lafargue’s and Parti Ouvrier thinking arose from electoral considerations: from the hopes raised by successes in the municipal elections of 1892 and in the national legislative elections the following year. Reformists such as Brousse and Millerand—and their respective newspapers—had come out strongly for the alliance. Vaillant’s and Allemane’s followers just as strongly rejected it, and although *Le Socialiste* was also opposed, it pitched its opposition an octave lower, fearing the alliance might drag France into war.

In contrast to his disapproval of the POF's stand on domestic (agricultural) matters, Engels showed greater understanding of the Guesdists' concerns in foreign policy matters in an election year. He found few objections to the party's progressive incorporation of patriotism into French Marxist thought. "The new departure of the Parti Ouvrier with regard to 'patriotism,'" he told Laura, "is very rational in itself; international union can exist only between *nations*, whose existence, autonomy, and independence as to internal matters is therefore implied in the very word internationalism." However, he found praise of the French Republic excessive (it was still bourgeois), and he worried about references to joint Franco-German socialist condemnation of the German empire. Such praise and such references might adversely affect the fortunes of German Social Democracy.

What he found disturbing were claims that France was destined to play the same leadership role in the future proletarian revolution as it had played in the bourgeois revolution of 1789–1798. Had Lafargue fallen under the influence of Jaurès and Millerand? The party's new stand on patriotism reminded Engels of the old Blanquism. The analogy, he told Lafargue, broke down, because a century after the French Revolution France was not an industrial leader and its working-class strength failed to match that of Germany. Such talk might damage the electoral chances of the SPD. A European war, unless quickly won by Germany, would stop the growth of socialism in that country. Germany attacked by Russia with the support of France had the right to defend herself. As usual, Engels, like Marx, placed his highest hopes in Germany, "the country most profoundly influenced by socialism and where the theory has most deeply penetrated the masses—where the fight will be settled. Proletarian emancipation," he warned Lafargue, "can be only an international deed; if you try to turn it into a purely French deed you are making it impossible."<sup>35</sup>

In the Nord, a frontier region, national feeling ran especially high, and the charges of antipatriotism and treason hurled at the Workers Party only hardened its patriotic line. A Sûreté report had Bebel and Liebknecht complaining of the French Marxists' lack of enthusiasm for collectivism in general and for international solidarity in particular.<sup>36</sup> The party's new approach in foreign affairs—the counterpart to its agricultural program—encouraged it to step up, or at least not to lessen, diatribes against Jews as foreigners. These attacks prompted one worker to send a letter to *Le Socialiste* complaining that Lafargue and his party were perpetually equating financiers and Jews. Not all were, the writer pointed out, and there were many Jewish workers.

Lafargue acknowledged the criticism; he replied that he admired the “persecuted Jews . . . trampled on for centuries [but] never conquered,” and denied that socialists were anti-Semitic or racist. They attacked Rothschild as the incomparable symbol of high finance, made distinctions only between capitalists and workers, and took pride in Marx, Lassalle, Frankel, Bernstein, and other Jews in socialist history. He had earlier regretted that there were so few Jews, “able, clever, and indefatigable,” among the socialists in France. He repeated this when he told a visiting English socialist, Max Beer, that the lack of Jews revealed a weakness within the French socialist movement.<sup>37</sup>

Thus the Parti Ouvrier began to accommodate two more constituencies, peasants and patriots. The former, thanks in large measure to Lafargue’s promotion of an agrarian program, were distinguished from agrarian capitalists insofar as they combined property ownership with their labor. The party could ignore neither the potential votes of small farmers nor their revolutionary élan, which early in the following decade was to be manifested by widespread rural uprisings, particularly on the part of winegrowers and woodcutters. The passions unleashed by the Dreyfus Affair, on the other hand, would strengthen the need to focus on perceived national interests. But although electoral opportunism contributed to the intensification of rural propaganda, the party’s shift in strategy failed its polemical purpose. Aside from socialist support in the “red” regions of the Midi and central France, peasants would prefer the democratic populism of the Radical Party or the antirepublican populism of the demagogic right and only rarely the Marxist socialism preached by Lafargue and the POE.<sup>38</sup>

## 9 Beaten But Not Stoned

On January 14, 1893, there took place the important meeting between socialists and Radicals at the Tivoli Vauxhall in Paris. Socialist deputies and their supporters, ranging from Marxists to Independents, formally allied themselves with Radicals, and all pledged to cooperate in the forthcoming national legislative election by supporting mutually acceptable progressive candidates. Disgust with the bourgeois republic, particularly with the Panama scandals, and the shame of Fourmies gave rise to cooperation between left-wing republicans and some socialists in parliament. Soon, even Boulangists, following the lead of the writer Maurice Barrès, joined the alliance.

We need each other, Lafargue explained to Engels. They need us for our strength; we help them organize in several important towns. We need them to prevent frightening off Radical workers and to show we are not “bogeys.” The unimpressed Engels again warned Lafargue about his ties to “Millerand & Co.” Although he did not advise against joint action in the coming election, he feared the loss of the POF’s separate identity.<sup>1</sup>

As early as October 1891, Lafargue was working to create a single parliamentary socialist group, one that would reach out to such “advanced” Radicals as Millerand and even to Possibilists. The following March, Lafargue and Ernest Ferroul, a deputy elected with Boulangist aid and now a fellow member of the POF’s executive committee, signed a joint declaration with Boulangist deputies such as Ernest Granger and Charles Laisant. Early in January 1893, Paris Marxists agreed to participate in a large pre-election rally with both Millerand-type moderates and Boulangists.<sup>2</sup> The coalition’s manifesto asking Parisians to attend, which Lafargue signed for the Guesdists, called for constitutional revision but left the specifics vague. Lafargue wanted socialists to harvest what Boulangists had sown, but Engels preferred, as he put it, to harvest the masses, not the leaders. The more militant elements in the Parti Ouvrier similarly objected to these



proposed alliances, above all, those with Boulangists. Lafargue also showed his ecumenism when he tried (unsuccessfully) to get the now politically moderate Deville to run for a safe seat, assuring him that his presence would be "of capital importance for socialism."<sup>3</sup>

Engels continued to fear that Lafargue's "repeated absences" from the Chamber were threatening his own chances for reelection. Engels agreed with Laura that the speeches in the countryside had helped and that with no money or newspaper her husband had little choice but to stump the country, but insisted that his primary task was a legislative one. Reports to the Paris Préfecture, which reported dissatisfaction by Lille voters with their deputy, similarly questioned Lafargue's reelection chances.<sup>4</sup> Sharing his wife's view, Lafargue was more optimistic. On his return the third week of March from an exhausting speaking trip (he had covered 3,671 kilometers in twelve days and slept for twelve hours after arriving home), he denied that he was in trouble. He had, he told Engels, nursed his constituency carefully all winter.<sup>5</sup>

A not atypical joint campaign appearance by Lafargue and Guesde was described by the labor historian Georges Weill, who attended as a young man in Dijon. Only fifty centimes admission (to cover expenses) was charged. The audience, met at the door by anarchist opponents with leaflets describing the collectivist state as oppressive, consisted mainly of workers and a scattering of "curious bourgeois." Calling himself the "traveling salesman of socialism," Lafargue glorified working-class energy and the solidarity shown in the recent Carmaux strike. Then he attacked bourgeois corruption as shown by the Panama affair, making mention of the millions of francs stolen during the course of a single day. To dramatize the amount, he said a worker saving twenty francs a week would accumulate one thousand francs in a year's time. To reach a million francs, the worker would need to save for a thousand years, and Lafargue made all elements of the bourgeoisie accomplices in the theft. Guesde then described the collectivist utopia that could replace this deplorable state of affairs. While more conservative listeners seemed interested, workers appeared awestruck, taking in these remarks in an almost religious silence. Many, said Weill, until then indifferent, "left convinced of the beauties of collectivism."<sup>6</sup>

Engels's pessimism, however, was well founded. By September 1893, the time of the election, Lafargue had served nearly two years as deputy but had given only one major speech, participated in only

seven debates, and proposed only six bills: on amnesty, on separation of church and state, on the elimination of tariffs on food imports, on the establishment of agricultural credit and municipal provisioning funds, on the regulation of foreign employment, and on the regulation of work for pregnant women and the creation of a maternity fund. The last he saw as especially significant. He had found that most women in Nord textile mills remained on the job throughout their pregnancies, often giving birth at work. And the new mothers, according to the testimony of witnesses at a 1904 parliamentary committee, usually returned to the mill within two or three weeks of their delivery. To the argument that there was no money to satisfy demands for industrial legislation, Lafargue pointed to the Finance Ministry's budget of several billion francs, including subsidies to large companies, and wondered why it could not find "some miserable millions" for French women and children, a most "patriotic expenditure."<sup>7</sup>

At the end of March 1893, at Engels's invitation, the Lafargues celebrated their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary in London. There they met with Liebknecht, Bebel, and some labor members of Parliament, such as John Burns. At the request of its president, Will Thorne, Lafargue spoke to the gas workers' union. For Engels, the elected leaders of three European socialist parties meeting together was another historic event, and he again wished Marx had been there to see it.<sup>8</sup> Back in France, Lafargue got involved in the strike of the Amiens weavers: he had rushed to the city and may have helped prevent a confrontation between strikers and troops. In any event, he saw the strike settled and himself hailed as a hero by the workers; or so he told Engels. Doubtless Lafargue was sincere, but wide of the mark, in believing that he was at the height of his popularity in the Nord.<sup>9</sup>

Still, optimism about the 1893 elections seemed justified. Socialist candidates began performing well at the polls, and the municipal elections of 1892 had foreshadowed the legislative gains of 1893. Not only the Parti Ouvrier, whose organ, *Le Socialiste*, was selling well and was even reproduced in cities other than Paris, but socialism in its entirety was winning popularity. Independent socialists Millerand and Abel Hovelacque, a Paris municipal councillor, founded a republican-socialist Federation of the Seine in February 1893. Jaurès was returned in a by-election early in the year, and the political strike of the Carmaux miners took place in the summer. And because the prerequisite for success in the national political arena was united action among the

diverse socialist factions and between socialists and Radicals, the “Socialist Union” was created: the first legislative, if not yet programmatic or structural, unification of French socialism.<sup>10</sup>

Parti Ouvrier leaders welcomed the support of the new converts to socialism, particularly Jaurès and Millerand. In a speech given at Calais, one of the forty-one cities where Lafargue spoke during a four-and-a-half-month period, he hailed that “honest and republican bourgeoisie personified by M. Millerand,” and expressed confidence that the party could count on it to work for nationalization of the Bank of France, mines, and railroads—though he admitted that progressive middle-class elements were not prepared to go further. Engels tentatively approved of the alliance with more-moderate socialists, and his reference to universal suffrage as “a splendid weapon” was picked up by Lafargue.<sup>11</sup>

These campaign appearances on behalf of his party, however, took their toll on Lafargue’s chances to keep his own seat, although not until the eve of the election did he begin to doubt his chances. Engels’s warnings finally struck home, and he decided to defend his parliamentary record in *Le Socialiste* and rationalize his decision to speak in the National Assembly as infrequently as possible. “Before entering the Chamber,” he told his readers, “I knew that the parliamentary work of socialism would be non-existent if there were not a dozen deputies . . . I remained convinced that there was nothing that could be done in this Panamist Chamber.” The only alternative, Lafargue continued, was to agitate throughout France, and this is what we did. When thirty or thirty-five socialist deputies are elected, we can use parliament to speak to the nation. He predicted that by 1897 socialists would win a majority or at least a strong minority.<sup>12</sup>

The Independent socialist newspaper, *La Petite République*, hailed the vote of August 20, 1893, as a “glorious socialist victory.” Socialist candidates amassed more than half a million votes, more than four times the number won in 1889. And after the runoff ballot of September 3, the newspaper celebrated the election of nineteen of the twenty-three candidates it supported. Also elected were a dozen former Boulangists running as socialists. Guesde was elected by the voters of Roubaix, and five other collectivists were sent to the Chamber of Deputies. The total number of socialists elected may have reached fifty. The POE, exultant, cried victory and promised new triumphs, while its opponents saw socialism as the “real danger for the future.”<sup>13</sup>

But Lafargue was not included; he had been defeated by 1,728 votes

in a total of 18,348 registered voters. As he admitted, he had been not only outspent and outslandered, but outmaneuvered. Apparently he had won in Lille but did poorly in the more rural districts of his constituency. An act of blatant gerrymandering brought reliably anti-socialist voters into his district when seven conservative precincts were added to his own in Lille. Although in a neighboring constituency socialist voters enabled the republican Opportunist candidate to defeat his clerical opponent, “republican discipline” had failed in Lafargue’s: he fell short of the needed Opportunist votes to defeat his opponent.<sup>14</sup>

On September 30, *Le Socialiste* published a letter from “a group of indignant republicans” complaining of Lafargue’s harassment in the village of Wavrin. His opponent, Loyer, a textile worker who had “rallied to republican institutions,” with town council support rented all the meeting rooms to keep Lafargue from speaking. The same council had assembled a hostile crowd to insult Lafargue when he descended from his train; the mob even hurled refuse and excrement at him. On the first ballot, Loyer outdistanced Lafargue but, because of the votes won by a third candidate, failed to secure a majority, necessitating the runoff that he narrowly won.<sup>15</sup>

In retrospect, Lafargue also believed he had erred in accepting financial help (2,500 francs) from the SPD and opening himself to charges he was in the pay of the German government. And at the Workers Party’s Paris Congress that October, Lafargue could draw on personal experience to argue that socialists required victories in rural areas if the party was to be successful.<sup>16</sup> Buoyant as ever, he told Engels that his own defeat and that of four other Marxist candidates in the Nord was nevertheless “glorious” and “filled with promise for the future.” And Laura, in a postscript, added, “He is beaten but not stoned.”<sup>17</sup> Lafargue pointed to socialist successes elsewhere—in the Seine, Allier, Côte d’Or, Gironde—and a near victory in the Pas-de-Calais. He seemed to relish the victory of Opportunists, or conservative republicans, at the expense of Clemencist radicals. Like Communists in the 1920s, he preferred more conservative elements to those who had a claim on working-class allegiance. For not only had royalists and clericals lost, but the governing Radicals appeared routed in having their leaders (Clemenceau, Floquet, Maujan) defeated. In any event, there was still useful work to perform outside of the Chamber. Fifteen years later, at the united socialist party’s Toulouse Congress in 1908, he was still rationalizing his defeat: “Socialists are not parliamentarians; on the

contrary, they are antiparliamentarians, who want to upset the government, the regime of lies and incoherence.”<sup>18</sup>

In his letters to the Lafargues, Engels tactfully attributed Paul's loss to his decision to “sacrifice himself for the party,” to traveling extensively on behalf of other candidates instead of looking after his voters and remaining active in parliament. As for the lack of oratory skills, Engels reminded him of the difficulties experienced by the first Social Democratic members of the Reichstag, but rightly guessed that he was happy to be out of the Chamber and only regretted the loss of his deputy's salary. As a sympathetic biographer noted, Lafargue was doubtless too independent and original to adapt to parliamentary routine. And he must have indeed experienced frustration on the Chamber floor. When, for example, a strike in Lens the previous October prompted him to criticize universal suffrage as an “ingenious instrument of government duplicity,” inasmuch as workers were “led to the ballot box by their employers and the rare victory of a working class candidate resulted in his dismissal and blacklisting,” Lafargue was admonished by the Chamber's presiding officer.<sup>19</sup>

Laura defended her husband's record: he had not neglected his constituency, and a majority of the Lillois had supported him. Had there been time to campaign in the rural areas, “Loyer, despite all his bribery and corruption, would probably have bitten the dust.” She resented the announcement made by the victorious Guesde, whose success had left him in a state of chronic exhilaration, that with his election “socialism was introduced into the Palais Bourbon.” Canonizing the town that had elected him, Guesde now referred to Roubaix as “a holy city.” Engels, too, was surprised by Guesde's euphoria and suggested that the latter exaggerated the significance of his victory: “To declare his election a revolution . . . from which a new era opens for the world in general is coming it [*sic*] rather too strong for ordinary mortals.”<sup>20</sup>

Paul replaced Guesde as correspondent for *Vorwärts* (the SPD's organ), no doubt as a result of Engels's efforts. The latter had told Bebel that the newspaper would be better informed with a correspondent in Paris. The indefatigable Engels also wrote to Victor Adler, the Austrian socialist leader and a close friend, indicating Lafargue's availability and his need of funds.<sup>21</sup> Laura insisted that he be paid, now that Guesde had access to the deputy's salary that her husband had lost. The Germans agreed to pay twenty francs for each article published, provided they were sent in German, and they suggested Laura as

translator. Liebknecht asked for a weekly column and promised it would appear simultaneously in *Vorwärts* and the Hamburg *Echo*.<sup>22</sup>

Ties between Guesde and Lafargue, never close, grew strained, but there is no indication Lafargue was jealous of Guesde's success. Certainly, he had to appreciate his colleague's development into one of the nation's leading orators. Now more listeners heard, and many recalled what they later described as Guesde's "incarnation of cold violence" and his "uncontested doctrine." Unlike Lafargue, he was to give the elected representatives of present society what one observer called "the shiver one feels before confronting the haughty and irrepressible enemy."<sup>23</sup>

The two men had differed over the appropriate Marxist response to Boulangism. More to the point were personality differences that prevented intimacy or even real amiability. Except for short periods, from the time he fled France until his own election as deputy in 1893, the impoverished Guesde lived in "black misery." He invariably required financial aid from the party, and his colleagues could not always pay his rent. His children slept on the floor; he could not afford transportation; and he did not always appreciate Lafargue telling him he was a "prisoner of the party, riveted to [his] task." Convicts, at least, are fed, replied Guesde, who said he had a wife and three children to feed. And he was beset by personal and family problems: the daughter was sent to live away, and one son was to attempt suicide. Guesde resented the lack of concern apparently shown by Lafargue, who, on one occasion, "knows for ten days we literally suffer from hunger," but who "can talk to me of the municipal problems of Calais and Boulogne when he is not calling me to the Chamber just to draft bills for him. This is more indifference than I can support." The bitterness passed but must have left an aftertaste. Yet Lafargue (and Deville) did provide funds, however inadequate, to meet Guesde's needs.<sup>24</sup>

In the half dozen years following his defeat, Lafargue dropped from political importance. The number of police reports on him decreased drastically (only two can be found in the Préfecture archives for the year 1894). Although he attended the Parti Ouvrier's eleventh congress in Paris in early October and was reelected to its executive committee, Lafargue, at least for the time being, largely abandoned the day-to-day political struggle and the accompanying tensions and conflicts, and turned to more scholarly and theoretical pursuits. Musing on Paul's poor showing in the Chamber and considering suggestions that he become a German citizen and run for the Reichstag, Karl

Kautsky (who was of Austrian descent) said "it would go even more poorly with me than with Lafargue. I would, like him, forfeit my scientific efficiency [as a member of parliament] without exchanging it for something better."<sup>25</sup> In any event, the new voice of French socialism, it was becoming clear, was no longer that of a Parti Ouvrier member: it belonged to Jean Jaurès.

For the remaining seventeen years of his life, Lafargue was to battle with Jaurèssian idealism and its tactical implications for the socialist movement. He was seconded strongly by Engels, who, until his death in 1895, repeatedly cautioned French Marxists about too close an alliance with independent socialists. However much he welcomed their presence in the Chamber and admired their ability to overthrow conservative governments, Engels, usually through Laura, warned Lafargue that the leadership shown by such of their leaders as Millerand and Jaurès (in the campaign to oust the reactionary Dupuy government and force the resignation of President Casimir-Périer) would "never do in the long run." He rejected as state socialism Jaurès's proposals for government controls of grain imports and prices and the latter's insistence on introducing the measure in the name of socialism. Excessive reliance on the bourgeois republic to achieve socialism was misguided; such a republic was no better than a monarchy; and its only use lay in providing a ready-made political form for future proletarian rule.<sup>26</sup>

First elected to parliament in 1885 at the age of twenty-five, Jaurès was defeated four years later but in 1893 returned to the Chamber of Deputies as a socialist. He followed the more integral socialism of Benoît Malon and consequently was more committed to a reformist strategy. A generation younger than the fifty-year-old Lafargue and forty-eight-year-old Guesde, Jaurès was to clash with "scientific" socialists on almost every question: whether to have socialists support Dreyfus; whether to have them approve of a socialist minister in a nonsocialist government; whether to provide support for that government; in short, whether to reject or retain the apocalyptic vision of eventual class violence.

Jaurès and other socialists in the new legislature had attacked Premier Charles Dupuy for his "retrograde and provocative programs." For the better part of three sessions the debate had waged; Jaurès won the admiration of even nonsocialists for the passion and eloquence of his oratory, and the government fell on November 26. Lafargue had welcomed "this devil of a man," as he called Jaurès, although Jaurès

did not join the Parti Ouvrier and continued to urge a more moral socialism tinged with idealistic elements.<sup>27</sup> Aware of his growing stature and eager to distinguish his idealism from their own materialist-based doctrine, Guesdists sought a debate in an age given to public discussion.

On January 12, 1894, Jaurès and Lafargue spoke before socialist students in the Latin Quarter on the materialist and idealist philosophies of history, and those present found it “a great moment” in the history of French socialism. The crowd flooded the hall, and both men seemed exhilarated by the challenge. Each spoke with fervor in support of his version of socialism. Their comments are worthy of scrutiny, for they provide a clear exposition of the two conflicting conceptions.<sup>28</sup>

Jaurès spoke first. He acknowledged the legitimacy of the materialist view of history, but reflecting the quest for unity in everything socialist, he wanted to show its compatibility with another, more idealistic, interpretation. Social, collective, and historic forces, particularly those issuing from and tied to the relations of production, indeed shaped the human outlook and even human morality. Change occurred when an unstable social system—that is, one that no longer reflected the economic relations of its productive forces—gave way to another that did. Change, he acknowledged, did not take place because men were motivated by abstract ideas of justice.

Even so, Jaurès insisted that humanity, from the outset, possessed an obscure idea, “a first indication of its destiny,” that is, a preconceived ideal. And when humankind set out on its path of development, it did not do so mechanically or automatically because of a transformation of the mode of production, but under the influence, whether obscure or clearly experienced, of its ideal: the idea became the moving force, and it was not concepts that issued from economic facts, but economic facts that little by little incorporated the ideal of humanity in reality, that is, in history.

While these two conceptions seemed directly opposed and mutually exclusive, they were in fact intertwined: the materialist held an idea of justice, and the idealist acknowledged the need of social transformation. Marx possessed both views, inasmuch as he perceived today’s class struggle as the beginning of tomorrow’s reconciliation of opposed forces. Since the Renaissance, human thought sought to reconcile and synthesize. Marx was right to say “the human brain does not by itself create an idea of justice [and that] even in intellectual



and moral life the human brain reflects economic phenomena.” While Jaurès accepted this view, he insisted that “humanity is the product of a long physiological evolution that preceded historical evolution” and that “already in the first brain of dawning humanity” there were pre-dispositions and tendencies: a sense of harmony, an ability to see the general in the particular, and a sense of fraternity. “Why,” he asked, “did man move from cannibalism to slavery, from slavery to serfdom, from serfdom to wage earning, and, eventually, from wage earning to socialism? Both because of the realization that it was a moral contradiction to butcher other men and a violation of the primary instinct of sympathy,” he answered, “and because it made more economic sense to use the vanquished foe as beasts of prey. The same sense of moral and economic contradiction explained [the advent of] serfdom and wage earning.”

“And there is in human history,” he concluded, “not only a necessary evolution but an intelligible direction and an ideal sense.” Therefore throughout the centuries man has been able to aspire to justice only in “aspiring to a social order less contradictory than the present order,” one regulated by the evolution of economic forms. “But at the same time, across all these successful arrangements, humanity seeks and affirms itself, and whatever the diversity of the milieux, the times, and economic imperatives, the same breath of lament and hope comes from the mouth of the slave, the serf, and the proletariat. It is the immortal breath of humanity that is at the very soul of what one calls the law. Therefore one need not oppose a materialist conception and an idealist conception of history. They blend together in a unique and indissoluble development, because if one cannot abstract man from economic relationships, one cannot abstract economic relationships from man, and at the same time that it is a phenomenon that evolves according to a mechanical law, history is an aspiration that is realized according to an ideal law.”

When his turn came to speak, Lafargue warned his listeners not to expect the same level of eloquence, but nonetheless to expect a reply. He denied the existence of innate ideas such as justice and fraternity. Pushing the argument to extremes, he asked: Why limit innate ideas to the mind of a savage? A sheepdog has a perfect idea of duty. To the anticipated reply that the idea here was given to the dog by man, Lafargue pointed to such undomesticated animals as male buffaloes, which sacrifice themselves to defend the female, or crows, which place

sentinels to warn their fellows pecking grain. And why be limited to moral ideas? Why not identify the origin of scientific ideas as innate?

Marxists, Lafargue replied, are Lockian empiricists. Ideas are acquired by the experiences of our ancestors and transmitted over the generations. The brain transforms sensations into ideas, as dynamos generate electricity from fuel; and hence the brain, far from an object of mystery, may be seen as an organ like others. As he had done before and would do in the future, Lafargue tried to demonstrate the material bases of ideas by tracing their etymological development from the names of empirical objects. Abstractions were true, Lafargue said, only insofar as they “accurately mirrored reality.” Far from “sleeping unconsciously in the head of the savage, the idea of justice was implanted in the human brain only after the establishment of private property.” Savages lacked a word for an idea such as justice; and even in a developed society, but one in which property is communized, the concept remains vague. The same holds true for monogamy; “the father dreams of worrying about [the legitimacy of] his child only when he has private property to transmit.” And justice as an abstraction, he predicted, would disappear when common ownership replaces private property.

As abstractions became separated from their material references, they could be used to “cloak reality for the interests of a particular group.” Justice, for example, provided “a rhetorical defense of bourgeois society.” Legal views are shaped and reshaped, as were property relationships in the different historical periods that embody them. “Justice and morality change from one historical epoch to another . . . finally to accommodate themselves to the interests and needs of the dominant class.” Today’s concept of justice voiced the interests and needs of the bourgeoisie. Moreover, even oppressed classes could make claims only in the language of a justice that reflected the interests of their oppressors. All this corresponded with Lafargue’s view of the hegemonic function of bourgeois cultural ideas and his wish to deflate class-based conceptions of justice and return the argument to concrete needs. “It is the needs of production that drive humanity and not the conscious or unconscious idea of justice.”<sup>29</sup>

For Jaurès, then, human development issued from preconceived ideas of justice and fraternity coming into contradiction with the social milieu. For Lafargue, it was the needs of production rather than the idea of justice that drove humanity. Cannibalism came to an end

because of the realization that slaves could be used to produce, and slavery came to an end not because of church teachings (which, on the contrary, introduced it to the Americas) but because the means of productivity had so developed as to make free labor cheaper. (Slavery, Lafargue pointed out, was at first approved by spokesmen for justice and morality.) Communism was an ideal, he admitted, but one that emerged from the "entrails of reality." "We are not utopians or dreamers," he concluded, "but scientists. We are communists because we are convinced that the economic forces of capitalist production fatally lead society to communism." And cynical justifications of class interest would "vanish like a bad dream when common property replaced private property." In communist society, justice would not only be "realized"; it would be "surpassed."

The debate provided a classic confrontation not only of two theoretical approaches to socialism but of their strategic implications as well: the orthodox Marxist, less sympathetic to sentiment and reform; the former philosophy teacher, more so. Jaurès's doctrine was less a revision of Marx, it has been argued, than an adaptation of Marx's doctrine to the traditions of French socialism, indeed, to French republicanism, and the philosophical issue appeared as moral idealism versus scientific determinism. On the other hand, it was Lafargue who had acquainted French readers with the notion that Marxism was to be understood "as a further refinement of the positivist scientism they knew so well."<sup>30</sup> But specialists in Marxist thought were already beginning to provide Jaurès's followers with a doctrine of their own. Because of such socialist scholars as Lucien Herr and Charles Andler, who knew the German texts, it was becoming possible for one to be a Marxist without having to be a member of, or sympathetic to, the Parti Ouvrier.

In the more practical political sphere, Lafargue appreciated Engels's concern about French Marxists associating too closely with independent socialists; however, he praised Millerand as the only Radical who had attacked both Ferry and "the assassins at Fourmies" and who spoke out for nationalization, and extolled Jaurès as "one of the speakers who commands the most attention in the Chamber." As a university professor, Jaurès was a most useful ally and one who allowed socialism to be heard "in circles we could not penetrate."<sup>31</sup>

Because of his intellectual background, Lafargue insisted, Jaurès "lends an air of respectability to socialism in the eyes of the bourgeoisie . . . Jaurès and Millerand are at the moment the two socialists

whom liberals most fear. One day perhaps they may become dangerous but that would mean that socialism is so powerful that they would not be able to do it much harm.”<sup>32</sup> That fall, at the time of the Nantes Congress, Lafargue tried to get Jaurès to join the Parti Ouvrier’s National Council. The latter’s refusal came as a source of immense relief to Guesde, who, less eager than Lafargue for socialist unity, feared he would be “annihilated” by Jaurès in the party executive committee.<sup>33</sup>

Engels was scarcely reassured: the more popular socialism became in France, the greater the likelihood a man like Jaurès could take over the entire movement. He was unhappy with Jaurès’s proposed industrial and social legislation, which he saw as working to perpetuate the status quo.<sup>34</sup> Engels also complained to Lafargue about Liebknecht’s apparent reformism: because of a threatened renewal of antisocialist legislation, Liebknecht had taken from Engels’s introduction to Marx’s articles on the class struggle in France “everything that could help him support the tactic of peace at any price and of opposition to force and violence.” Engels insisted that he had advocated these (reformist) tactics for use only in “*the Germany of today* and even then *with many reservations* [emphasis in original]” that they were not fully appropriate in France, Belgium, Italy, and Austria, and that they may not be applicable in the Germany of tomorrow. Clearly, when surveying the French scene, Engels resented Millerand, Jaurès, and other Independents “who already arrogate to themselves the sole rights to speak for you in all the Chamber.”<sup>35</sup>

Even so, both Engels and Lafargue welcomed successive socialist victories. By early 1895, the union of socialists and Radicals in the Chamber, forming a cohesive and effective opposition, had overturned three ministries and ousted a president of the Republic. Engels could find words of praise for Jaurès and Millerand, “who allowed [you] to take advantage of the political situation.” If such victories continued, they would, as in Germany, polarize socialists and an increasingly reactionary bourgeoisie. Each victory would strengthen the former until the arrival of “the day of crisis.” Lafargue took special delight in the resignation of President Casimir-Périer, which he attributed to the pressure of socialist deputies.<sup>36</sup>

But while relishing the gains made, Lafargue minimized the extent to which independent socialists were responsible. He instead pointed to Guesde’s role, however limited by illness and a lack of familiarity with parliamentary procedures. But perhaps he was reflecting his own experience when he nevertheless believed that “the job of deputy does

not suit him; he has never been so inactive and ill so often as since he was elected.” As for the Independents’ popularity, Lafargue was confident that the Parti Ouvrier could control the socialist movement when the anticipated final crisis at last arrived and thus could keep the stamp of ideological purity on the party.<sup>37</sup>

Sometime in June 1895 Lafargue met Lenin for the first time. Already a convinced socialist, the Russian revolutionary had left St. Petersburg for Switzerland at the beginning of the year, delegated by the Social Democratic Party to meet the Emancipation of Labor Group, the first Russian Marxist organization. Made up of a small number of Russian intellectuals forced to emigrate, it exercised little practical influence but since its founding in 1883 provided intellectual stimulus to others. On this, his first trip abroad, Lenin saw Plekhanov and Paul Axelrod, and then went to Paris, because it was a center for Russian immigrants and because he was tired of Switzerland, a “bourgeois republic” with its “material way of life.”<sup>38</sup>

Lenin heard Durkheim lecture and Jaurès campaign, paid respects to the Communards murdered in the Père-Lachaise cemetery, and bought books on the Commune. He was favorably impressed by the city, although he could not understand the spoken language. He saw his mission as establishing ties among the dispersed Russian émigrés and rallying their support for a Marxist-led revolution. Aware of Lafargue as the first Marxist deputy and of the latter’s acquaintance with Plekhanov, he asked a mutual friend for an introduction. Lafargue, whose long acquaintance with the exiled Peter Lavrov (who had fled Russia to settle in Paris) attested to his sustained interest in that country, greeted Lenin warmly and questioned him on Russian socialist propagandists. Lenin’s assurance that Russian workers were studying Marx left Lafargue skeptical, if not astonished: “What? They read Marx? They read him? And they understand him? You’re mistaken! They understand nothing! Here in France after twenty years of socialist propaganda, no one understands Marx.”<sup>39</sup>

## 10 Let Us Storm the Forts

After Engels transformed Marx's notes into the third volume of *Capital*, Laura urged him to rest before beginning the fourth. In his reply, dated December 17, 1894, the seventy-four-year-old Engels provided her with an indication of his workload. He tried to keep abreast of the socialist movement in five large countries and a number of small ones in Europe and North America. Accordingly, he received a total of seven daily newspapers: three German, two English, one Italian, and one Austrian. As for weekly newspapers, he read two from Germany, seven from Austria, one from France, three from the United States (two in English and one in German), two from Italy, and one each in Polish, Bulgarian, Spanish, and Bohemian. There were, in addition, three languages that he was learning.

Moreover, he received calls from "all sorts," including job seekers and newspaper correspondents who expected "long explanations." With the need to read proofs for volume three of *Capital*, he had not found time to read more than "one book" in 1894. Now he was beginning to prepare publication of Lassalle's letters to Marx; and he wanted to rewrite his own *Peasants War*, begin the chief chapters of a proposed biography of Marx, and reedit his and Marx's earlier writings. He was training Kautsky and Bernstein to read Marx's handwriting. He was, he admitted, beginning to feel his age, and acknowledged there was work enough for two men of forty. "So," he told Laura, "if you have occasionally to await a letter from me you will know the reason why."<sup>1</sup>

Worried about how Engels planned to dispose of her father's papers, Eleanor sought Laura's help in ensuring that they would go to the two sisters. Engels had taken into his home Kautsky's divorced (first) wife, Louise, and her husband, a Viennese doctor named Freyberger, and indeed the couple was to receive a quarter of Engels's legacy. Eleanor thought Freyberger an adventurer and feared that if he obtained them, he might easily sell Marx's papers. Unaware that Engels planned to

leave the papers to her, she portrayed him as a pathetic old man in their hands and was so concerned that she asked Laura to come to London. It was “not necessary” for Paul to accompany her because Engels still resented the “opportunism” shown at Nantes, “and his [Paul’s] influence would therefore be nil.”<sup>2</sup>

Eleanor was especially anxious to secure Marx’s correspondence and other family letters entrusted to Engels by Marx, which, she told Laura, was “ours” and which she planned to use in writing a biography of her father. Laura, too, resented the proprietary rights claimed by the German socialists, and not until mid-1898 did she approve of Mehring’s plans to edit some of Marx’s works. These common concerns and no doubt an awareness that the death of Engels would sever yet another link with their childhood drew the two women closer. They now exchanged letters regularly and kept each other informed.<sup>3</sup>

To set their minds at ease, in November 1894 Engels told Marx’s two surviving daughters how he planned to dispose of his estate. His own books and those left to him by Marx (together with one thousand pounds) would go to the German Social Democratic Party; Laura and Eleanor would each receive three-eighths of his money, with the understanding that each would contribute one-eighth to Jenny’s children and that Lafargue would be named their guardian. The money would be spent as Paul and Laura thought best, because English law made it difficult if not impossible for Engels to set up a trust. That Engels had once more reconciled himself to Lafargue was revealed by the end of the following month, when Engels asked Laura to send “[his] love to the ‘Nigger.’”<sup>4</sup>

The two sisters, moreover, were to receive all royalties on Marx’s published works. When Laura, too, had insisted on the return of her father’s papers to her and Eleanor, Engels acknowledged that she had “every right to ask.”<sup>5</sup> In a codicil to his will dated March 26, 1895, he provided that all Marx’s manuscripts and letters, except those written by himself, were to go to Eleanor. (His own would go to the German party, except letters from the Lafargues, the Avelings, the Freybergers, and his relatives, which would be returned to the senders.) Later Laura was to make it clear to Kautsky that Bebel and Bernstein had been named as Engels’s, not as Marx’s, literary executors.<sup>6</sup>

The great arbiter between the French and German socialist movements died on August 5, 1895, at the age of seventy-five, of cancer of the esophagus and larynx. Apparently, Engels was unaware of the seriousness of his condition, having thought it only a glandular infec-

tion. Still, he had asked Laura to stay with him at Eastbourne in June, and Eleanor and Aveling came at the end of July after her departure. His last letter to Laura, dated July 23, expressed dismay on learning that Kautsky, Bernstein, Mehring, Lafargue, and others were planning to write a history of socialism and that he had not been asked to participate. Lafargue had in fact been approached by Kautsky and had agreed to write on peasant communities in France from the Middle Ages to the outbreak of the French Revolution. Engels worked almost to the end; on April 13, he sent Lafargue a detailed commentary on the latter's manuscript on the origins and evolution of property.<sup>7</sup>

Both Lafargues went to the funeral, bringing the nineteen-year-old Jean Longuet with them. Paul was so genuinely grief-stricken that he could not finish his eulogy. "Farewell, dear friend! Never shall I find a friend so loving, so good and so considerate. In union with Marx, you gave us the Communist Manifesto; you gave the French proletariat the program that awakened us to class consciousness and leads us in the daily fight for the conquest of political power . . . you showed us the battlefield. You gave us the weapons and the slogan—we will fight and triumph."<sup>8</sup> More eulogies were delivered, among others, by Dr. Samuel Moore, Liebknecht, Bebel, and Aveling.

Lafargue meant every word, for despite their disagreements Engels's advice, which came in an unceasing flow, was often taken and always appreciated. And of course the money made available over the years had ensured the Lafargues' financial survival.<sup>9</sup> Engels's support continued after death, for he left, as promised, the bulk of his estate, about 25,000 pounds, to Marx's daughters. After the other bequests and expenses, Laura and Eleanor probably each received between 4,000 and 5,000 pounds, which then amounted to a significant sum of money.<sup>10</sup>

Both daughters had always placed high value on homes and gardens, and both began househunting even before Engels's estate was settled. (Eleanor and Edward Aveling eventually bought a cottage outside of London.) Within two months of their benefactor's death, Laura wrote that she and Paul were looking in the Paris suburbs and had found a house available at auction in Draveil, a town of about 2,200 people twenty miles southeast of the city. It needed repairs but had "a splendid garden reaching to the Sénart forest," and according to Paul she "was lusting for it."<sup>11</sup> A few months later the couple purchased the house for an estimated forty thousand francs. Because of the need to complete extensive repairs, they did not take occupancy until mid-



March 1896. By the following month, reported a pleased Laura, her husband was continually busy in the garden.<sup>12</sup>

The house, situated at 20 Grande Rue on an extensive tract of land, was large, and the fact that they purchased, rather than rented, distinguished the Lafargues, for only *grandes familles* then bought the house they lived in. It was “a wonderful place . . . a real estate . . . magnificent,” said Eleanor on a visit. It permitted the couple to live well, and its “grandeur” left Eleanor “uneasy about the future of Marxism in France.” “The house has about thirty rooms,” she told Kautsky, “not counting outbuildings like the large billiard room . . . and a studio [and] a large house where the gardener lives, endless greenhouses, and houses for every sort of winged (and unwinged) beast [plus] a huge orchard.” As far as the grounds were concerned, she went on, “it is more a park than a garden, and there is, apart from the flowers, every vegetable and fruit you could possibly think of; as to the livestock there are 100 fowls, dozens of pigeons, rabbits, pheasants, partridges, ducks, a lamb—and they are going to get a cow.” The surrounding countryside was described as “exquisite . . . with the forest of Sénart and the banks of the Seine at the very gate.” She wondered whether her brother-in-law could return to less bucolic pursuits, specifically to prepare for publication draft articles by Marx on the Crédit Mobilier Bank, and later she complained that he “only cultivates his cabbages and livestock.”<sup>13</sup>

Family members, friends, and visiting socialists all received invitations to visit. As shown by Lafargue’s instructions to the Devilles, it was but a short train ride from the Gare de Lyon, and then a bus ride or long walk, eased by the conversation of those who found on leaving the train that they were going to the same destination. Finally, they came upon a waiting Lafargue, who with a smile ushered them in. The lunch lasted far too long for those who hoped to be able to roam through the adjacent forest.<sup>14</sup> Since returning to Paris, the Lafargues had regularly invited foreign socialists to their home, and the police noticed the frequency with which Russian guests appeared. Liebknecht stopped over on a return from London to reminisce with “Lörchen”; and Dormoy’s eleven-year-old granddaughter spent her school break there. The Avelings visited during September 1897, and Eleanor was once more pleased to see the gardens “still all green and gold.” On one occasion, Laura was apologizing to her for not writing, as she had “a house full of people for the last few days.”<sup>15</sup>

Carrying a letter of introduction from Eleanor, Max Beer, the young

English socialist, came to Draveil and noted that Laura played the part of “a lady.” For Beer, who knew both sisters, Eleanor took after her father while Laura resembled her mother, “Baroness von Westphalen.” And she experienced difficulties in finding suitable maids. Marx’s longtime maid Helene Demuth, who had brought up the Marx children, who had lent them money on occasion, who had helped them move into their first Paris homes, but who was never written to directly by Laura or Jenny, had died in 1890.<sup>16</sup> As for Paul, Marx Dormoy recalled that at the time, with “a magnificent head surrounded by brilliantly white curly hair, a somewhat long straight nose . . . above all, two sparkling eyes of impish irony and a smile tempered with goodness,” he still “cut an impressive figure.” He loved to debate and was, as Guesde had said, happy to be shown wrong. Dormoy noted that in Draveil, on Sunday afternoons, one could meet various personalities “from many countries.”<sup>17</sup>

Visiting the Lafargues as a child with his parents (the Jean Longuets), Robert-Jean Longuet, often found his uncles, Edgar and Marcel Longuet, and their families. He and his cousins named Lafargue “L’Original” (the eccentric); he described his great-uncle as “a robust and handsome man with white hair and a thundering voice,” whose air of authority impressed the boy. Still, Robert-Jean saw that while amiable, Paul lacked the warmth toward children that is so noticed by them. His great-aunt Laura, on the other hand, “in spite of her air of a dignified lady and somewhat distant, was immeasurably warmer toward us.” The couple, he recalled, was devoted to each other, she soft-spoken, he booming ebullient.<sup>18</sup> Jean Longuet, a future socialist party leader, was very much influenced by Eleanor Marx. As a law student, he became involved in the students’ collectivist movement group in Paris, attended Parti Ouvrier congresses, and became a Dreyfusard. He was never on friendly terms with his father, who eight years after Jenny’s death had lived with and then married a young Normande, of whom his sisters-in-law disapproved.<sup>19</sup>

Lafargue, like Engels, liked good food—which, however, he ate sparingly—and good living, but it was good political talk rather than the number of courses that prolonged these gatherings. Robert-Jean Longuet was struck by the impassioned tone of the two Lafargues: most striking, he recalled, were the “animated disagreements” between Laura and Paul. “I was surprised by the vivacity with which Laura unhesitatingly criticized her husband. As for him, he always made caustic replies, given in a thundering voice, which still resonates

in my ears: 'Women have long hair and short ideas,' which made Laura jump."<sup>20</sup>

According to a police informer, Lafargue had promised to use the inheritance in the cause of socialism: "to aid socialists of all countries, all those who need aid." Certainly the Lafargues extended hospitality to French and foreign visitors in the movement. The Guesdist militant Lucien Roland recalled how he met in Draveil Kollonati; Marguerite Wien, who married Marcel Cachin; Bracke; the Polish socialist, WoŹnorska; and others. Veritable feasts were prepared on these occasions, and apparently enjoyed by those who attended.<sup>21</sup>

Even so, little was done to use the money to further socialist activities, and, as Eleanor noted, ownership of such expensive property generated deeply felt criticism. A Sûreté report stated that Lafargue's "bourgeois manner since moving to the country, his lack of participation in the party plus his general unwillingness to spend one franc of his undeserved money" on behalf of the movement infuriated the POF executive and was particularly repugnant to Guesde.<sup>22</sup> The hostile Zévaès, angered on hearing of Briand's estimate of the Lafargues' worth at 100,000 francs, believed that Paul was busily investing in English stocks and cutting coupons.<sup>23</sup> But although reproached by those who believed so, the Lafargues were not millionaires. Whether by choice or inability, they had little domestic help, and the two worked hard to keep their house and property in good repair. Lafargue was no more politically active in Draveil than in Le Perreux, although he may have helped to establish a trade union of laborers in the town.<sup>24</sup>

It is nevertheless true that unlike Guesde, Lafargue seldom stayed in regular touch with his comrades in the party, and this was even more true after the mid-1890s. Never a man of the masses, his bourgeois life style was easily resented both by enemies of the Parti Ouvrier and by the most militant-sounding elements within it, who exaggerated his wealth.<sup>25</sup> *Le Réveil socialiste du Var*, in its April 16, 1902, issue, described him as a millionaire living in a chateau. The durable René Chauvin, elected as a deputy in 1893 but defeated five years later, was supposed to have remarked: "He is a cad. Since he became rich, he busies himself on his property. One no longer sees him because he is afraid they will borrow money."<sup>26</sup> Guesde's friends, especially those in the Nord, criticized Lafargue for not monetarily helping the ailing party chief. Yet Lafargue was still personally paying off the fine imposed by the Douai court, contributing to electoral campaigns, mak-

ing many donations for fines and meetings, and in fact providing aid to Guesde. Harassed by letters of solicitation as a deputy and even more so now, he saw his mission primarily as that of aiding immigrant socialists. On the other hand, he did like his pleasures.

Lafargue's refusal to run for the Paris Municipal Council in 1896 fueled charges that thanks to his legacy he had retired from the socialist movement to live as a country gentleman.<sup>27</sup> However, the real reason Lafargue withheld his candidacy—in a working-class district in northeast Paris whose incumbent had died—was his conviction that he could not win. "I would prefer to wait for the general elections of 1898 and run in Lille, where I owe my comrades a debt," he told Guesde. "I understand the importance of winning a victory in Paris . . . but a sure victory is necessary; defeat would be disastrous now."<sup>28</sup> His refusal to participate actively in politics also issued from his recommitment to his writing and from the family problems that preoccupied him and Laura, specifically those raised by the Avelings and the Longuet children.

Although Eleanor deplored Aveling's infidelity and frequent absences, she continued to live with him and even submitted to extortion. Under an assumed name, in early June 1897 Aveling married a twenty-two-year-old actress, Eva Frye. Yet it was not until the end of August that he left Eleanor's home, taking much of value in the house. (It was the fear that he would get access to and sell Marx's remaining papers that prompted the German Social Democrats to fight for them.) The desperate, and by now impoverished, Eleanor felt able to confide only in her half-brother, the illegitimate Freddy Demuth, and even then, she only hinted of her distress, stating that Edward suffered from a "moral disease." Incredibly, on September 1 Aveling returned to extort money from Eleanor by threatening to tell of his marriage, or of Freddy's true paternity, or both. Although she and Aveling spent much of the month in Draveil, there is no record of any discussion between the two sisters regarding her personal misfortunes. Back in London, the unfortunate Eleanor threw herself into trade union and immigrant labor activity.

News of the scandal broke the following year. On March 31, utterly worn out, the forty-three-year-old Eleanor committed suicide by taking hydrocyanic (prussic) acid. Aveling thereupon began living openly with his legal wife. Eleanor's friends, who out of deference to her had maintained a discreet silence, now openly denounced him and even spoke of bringing him to trial, but realized there was insufficient mate-

rial evidence. In any event, four months after her suicide, Aveling, who suffered from lung congestion and had been operated on in February, was himself dead, on August 2.<sup>29</sup>

At the same time, there remained the question of relations with Charles Longuet and Jenny's children, a problem that called for more direct involvement by the Lafargues. Paul and Laura had disapproved of his remarriage and committed themselves to looking after the Longuet children even before Engels formally provided for them. The money soon disappeared, and Longuet repeatedly sent lengthy requests to the Lafargues and to Eleanor before her death complaining of a lack of funds for the education of the three younger ones, Edgar, Jenny (Mémé), and Marcel.<sup>30</sup> Jean, now studying law, wanted Mémé to be educated in England; Edgar showed an interest in medicine, and Marcel was preparing for the baccalaureate. Longuet continually pleaded poverty, maintaining he could not even afford to visit Draveil (from Paris) and requesting repayment of tuition fees. Unsuccessful with Paul, Longuet told Laura it was her duty to intercede or else he would have to take the children out of school and send them to work.<sup>31</sup>

Regardless of—or perhaps in part to escape from—family problems, Lafargue contributed two or three articles a month for *Le Socialiste*, usually to engage in analysis or comment on current events. His topics included “the theory of surplus value and the bourgeois economists,” “the Madagascar expedition” (in which he denounced imperialism), “the public debt and its origins” (the debt being seen as “a capitalist device”) and “Russia, the arbiter of Europe.” He was also lecturing, but to more scholarly audiences. In the winter of 1897, he spoke in the chief university towns in Holland, having been invited by the Dutch Social Democratic Party.<sup>32</sup> But it was to “serious writing” such as literary criticism and theory that he devoted himself.

“Now that I have time to study and write,” Lafargue wrote Kautsky after his defeat in the 1893 election, “I’m going to resume work on the evolution of the novel in France, from Rousseau to Zola.”<sup>33</sup> As early as 1868, Lafargue had been exploring the possibility of an alternate career in literature, and now, no longer a deputy, he showed renewed interest. Laura, we saw, hinted at a novel her husband had completed, and although no trace of his efforts survive, Lafargue still dreamed of producing one that would make his reputation as a serious writer. Whether fiction or criticism, he wrote at a furious pace. Earlier Laura had commented: “Yesterday a letter came from Danielson [who had

translated *Capital* into Russian] inviting Paul to scribble away for the *Northern Review*. And, oh Lord, he does scribble! You should hear the obstreperous scratching of his pen that accompanies the discreeter humming of my own." Having always wanted to publish in "serious" journals, he was disappointed when rejected. "I try to manage," he told Engels in 1889, "but there are no openings for my articles . . . a few papers notice . . . and occasionally praise them, but that is as far as it goes."<sup>34</sup> Not until socialists published their own reviews, *L'Ere nouvelle* and *Le Devenir social*, in the five-year period between 1893 and 1898, would he find a ready outlet for new—and previously written—articles. Freed from legislative duties and having minimized party responsibilities, and now financially secure, Lafargue would turn to (Marxist-inspired) literary criticism and scholarship.

If during the past quarter century Lafargue had subordinated literary to political interests, he had always seen both as related: denunciation of the bourgeois cultural heritage served theoretical and political purposes. Voltaire had begun the debunking of feudal values; Lafargue believed he had begun that of bourgeois values. Indeed, his chief criticism of Hugo and his legendary glory issued from his conviction that the great writer had camouflaged the extent of working-class strength. Lafargue as literary critic is still largely uncharted territory. It is, perhaps, understandable that these first sustained efforts to apply Marxist criticism would receive scant attention in general histories of French literature; less excusable is the failure of Marxist writers to consider Lafargue's literary criticism as they have that of Mehring and Plekhanov.<sup>35</sup>

Like other socialists, especially those oriented toward syndicalism, Marxists showed little interest in literary criticism: they held ideas as secondary in the official life of the party. As late as 1901, when a congress of French socialist organizations entertained a proposal to put a section "on art" in the definitive constitution of a new unified party "because the artistic and literary education of the proletariat is an indispensable element of its emancipation," the proposal was rejected. And it had been introduced, moreover, not by a delegate from a political organization but by one representing a free thinkers' society.<sup>36</sup> Exceptions were Jaurès, who commented regularly on books in *La Dépêche de Toulouse*, and Georges Renard, one of Malon's successors as editor of *La Revue socialiste*, who wrote literary criticism and history.

The powerful SPD chiefs largely ignored the writings of Marx and

Engels on literature as irrelevant to the class struggle. Franz Mehring applied class perspective to his literary analyses, believing that the greatness of a writer reflected his success in presenting the aspirations and ideals of the class he historically represented—although Mehring did not equate artistic value with such successful class identification.<sup>37</sup> He tended toward a crude economic determinism and had been warned by Engels against “deducing political, juridical and other ideological conceptions, as well as the acts derived from them, from fundamental economic facts.” He had been warned, too, against the danger of schematization should one neglect the “manner by which the concepts appear.”<sup>38</sup>

Georgi Plekhanov had sought new arguments for materialism in the world of ideas. He believed, as did Lafargue and Mehring, that Marxist analysis could supply answers to problems of philosophy and social development. And like Lafargue, he was not an authority in the fields that he explored: he piled up examples of the principles they were supposed to illustrate, blind to the gaps between them and unaware that although it was easy to find cultural phenomena issuing from the technological level of society, it was also easy to find examples of the other way around.<sup>39</sup> In any event, Plekhanov’s criticism emerged largely during the period 1897–1912; both he and Mehring had been preceded by Lafargue.

Was there a correlation between “the profoundly working class character of French socialism” and the little interest shown by its militants in these matters? Non-Marxist intellectuals charged Marxism with having “hypnotized the men of the party with the economic side of socialism.” Guesde—and even Brousse—were seen as bureaucratic types, averse to revolutionary romanticism. The historian Thierry Paquot held these early Marxists to be incapable of applying Marxist analyses to art; and with the exception of Lafargue, who in a deliberately iconoclastic way sought to cut the ties culturally binding the working movement to the French Jacobin tradition and bourgeois culture, they did not even try. Even Jaurès, Paquot said, was a prisoner of the bourgeois democratic tradition; only Lafargue dared to break with it.<sup>40</sup>

In brief, Lafargue sought to denounce, and tried to convince others to denounce, the nation’s bourgeois cultural heritage; and he fully appreciated the great difficulties experienced by French socialist intellectuals to define themselves in an original way.<sup>41</sup> Here, too, Lafargue differed from Guesde, who, as with religion, saw no need for any

action other than the economic elimination of capitalism. "Let us set to work resolutely to uproot the capitalist tree," Guesde told anticlerical workers in 1894, "[and] the day the tree is cut down, religion and other forces which come from it will disappear forever."<sup>42</sup>

But for Lafargue the explicit rejection of bourgeois cultural values necessarily accompanied the political struggle undertaken by Marxists. Because bourgeois domination rested not only on its control of the state but also on its control of moral and religious values, it was necessary both to create a workers' party and to oppose all expressions of bourgeois ideology with Marxist thought.<sup>43</sup> Throughout his career, Lafargue fought not only idealists who asserted the independence of morality and ideas from material conditions but also socialists who saw no need to pursue any agenda other than that providing for political and economic action. He worked ceaselessly to undermine the bases of bourgeois morality. As early as 1880, Lafargue's dedication of *Le Droit à la paresse* to his colleagues on the staff of *L'Egalité* condemned the bourgeoisie, who now preached abstinence and rejected such forebears as Rabelais and Diderot. At the time, he had cried out for cultural as well as political audacity: "Let us storm the forts of capitalist morality and social theory, let our criticism demolish bourgeois prejudice while awaiting our revolutionary action to overturn capitalist ownership. To war."<sup>44</sup>

Until his death, Lafargue indeed made war on the bourgeois "deities" of "Progress," "Justice," "Liberty," "Civilization," "Humanity," and "Nation," all of which he charged with presiding over the destinies of countries that had managed to shake off the aristocratic yoke. His lecture on the "Economic Materialism of Karl Marx" argued the replacement of the Catholic gods by these even more "grotesque" bourgeois gods. Progress, he insisted, was proclaimed by the lay priests of the bourgeoisie: the philosophers, moralists, and economists who anticipated the development and perfection of the species. In reality, progress only brought people to capitalist civilization, and the price paid was their physical and moral degeneration.<sup>45</sup> And capitalism exported its civilization with alcohol, pillage, and genocide. In both *Le Religion du capital* and *Le Droit à la paresse*, Lafargue condemned "moralists and economists" who preached labor and abstinence to wage earners, who affirmed in a learned way that property was the legitimate fruit of labor, and who proclaimed that without the wealthy the poor would perish. The bourgeoisie concealed its exploitation with noble slogans: it called stealing wholesale and restituting retail,



“philanthropy”; forcing workers to join in constructing bourgeois fortunes, “cooperation”; taking the largest share of the fruits of labor, “participation”; teaching workers to submit quietly to “earthly miseries” in return for “heavenly joys,” “religion—the best moral brake on the desires and passions of the lower class.”<sup>46</sup> Consequently, Lafargue wanted nothing less than to strip the official cultural spokesmen of their literary prestige. As we have seen, when he was able to turn more seriously to criticism, he searched for social reality in popular songs, in variations of language, and in myths.

Aside from his essay on Hugo, not published until 1891, and the articles published in *La Nouvelle Revue* in the late 1880s, Lafargue, while seeking to provide a Marxist literary voice in Paris literary circles, continued to inform a more proletarian public. *Le Socialiste*, and at Kautsky’s request *Die Neue Zeit*, began to publish Lafargue’s literary criticism.<sup>47</sup> In spite of their resistance to carrying works in nonpolitical and noneconomic areas, both publications, although more often the German newspaper, printed occasional articles on cultural and literary themes.

The January 2, 1886, issue of *Le Socialiste* (later reprinted in *Die Neue Zeit*) carried Lafargue’s review of Alphonse Daudet’s *Sappho*. Lafargue’s observation that “the novel is the literary form *par excellence* of the bourgeoisie” is today a commonplace but was then a more audacious statement.<sup>48</sup> He later wrote that the rise and fall of the novel reflected the fortunes of the bourgeoisie—and that both were now in a state of decline. A comparison was made with the epic and with classical tragedy, both of which had similarly disappeared with the aristocracy they had represented.<sup>49</sup>

Few novels, Lafargue wrote, were more thoroughly bourgeois than *Sappho*. He tried to make clear the hypocrisy of the bourgeoisie in that it idealized Sappho, who, unlike Nana, gave herself without selling herself and without ruining any of her lovers. The novel’s “lying and moral nature” thus seduced the young bourgeois of the period. “If the bourgeois ideal is to find a woman who guarantees him a kick [*coup de pied*] worthy of Venus, who costs him little money, and who can be discarded like an orange peel after the juice is extracted, [then] the hero of M. Daudet enjoys that happiness.” The girl disappears without complaint when it is time for the young bourgeois to become serious. Lafargue contrasted the hero of Prévost’s *Manon Lescaut* (which he had confused with *Les Liaisons dangereuses*), the “intrepid” knight Des Grieux, with Daudet’s “insipid nullity” Gaussin; while the former

would give up everything to follow Manon because "the men of the nobility were capable of forgetting their personal interest, the bourgeois is an animal so egotistical he could not even suppose one might expect of him an action contrary to his interests." Reflected was the "bourgeois principle" of paying the smallest possible price for services rendered.

In focusing on the artist's class and the social function of his work, on Daudet's conformity and blindness to bourgeois egotism, Lafargue made it clear that literary criticism was part of the larger war against capitalism.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, his essay on Daudet issued from his opposition to the Decazeville court decision. The tears shed for the murdered foreman amounted to bourgeois hypocrisy in view of the thousands of miners starved by the company. He made use of both political protest and literary criticism to stigmatize bourgeois society, which blamed crime on such "subversive ideas" as those of Darwin, when in reality it was provoked by capitalist exploitation.

The goal of literary criticism was that envisioned by Lafargue in his study of Hugo: to illuminate the character, particularly the class affiliation, of the writer and the social implications of the work produced. Hugo had been condemned as the "producer of liberal bourgeois diatribes" but was more than a simple "seller of images": he was a "social type," the bourgeois artist of the nineteenth century. Lafargue must, of course, be put in his times: the last third of the nineteenth century was marked by a reaction against the artificial utopianism and the humanitarian idealism of 1848, a reaction that began under the Second Empire and was reinforced by the development and spread of the new idols, positivism and scientific advances.

Late in April 1891, after the publication of Emile Zola's *L'Argent*, Engels in a letter to Kautsky recognized the author as a major French realist writer, adding that it was "important" for *Die Neue Zeit* to publish a serious article on him and that Lafargue was "the man indicated to do it."<sup>51</sup> Accordingly, while imprisoned in Sainte-Pélagie for incitement to riot, Lafargue, who had earlier dismissed Zola's realism and the novelist's attempts to produce *Germinal* as a play, prepared a long study critical of Zola's novels and of *L'Argent* in particular. Considered inappropriate for *Le Socialiste* and rejected by other French newspapers and reviews, it was finally published as four articles in *Die Neue Zeit*.<sup>52</sup>

Lafargue compared Zola favorably to those "alleged" realists who were "superficial observers of reality," who "never go back from the

consequences to the causes,” who only rely on “affected language” and pay more attention to words than to the realities they represent. Zola did these things too but happily had “introduced a new element” in studying such economic phenomena as mines, shops, les Halles, and the Bourse. He provided his readers with real characters, not “extraordinary creatures who raise themselves beyond human nature and direct social events.” Lafargue admired him for relating their actions to determined causes, both social and psychological, even though at times the writer exaggerated the weight of heredity, which showed “artificiality and arbitrariness rather than the scientific objectivity claimed” and which made him inferior to Balzac.

Still, as “the only modern writer who has consciously dared to show how man is dominated and destroyed by social necessity,” Zola was a worthy successor to Balzac. His heroes differed from Balzac’s because the struggle for life had changed significantly during the half-century separating the two writers. Unlike Balzac, Zola was writing at a time of concentrated capitalist development and so was better able to describe the “more bitter and more prominent” character taken on by capitalism. Its economic structures were stronger, and man was accordingly reduced in stature. He had become more of “a cripple” and “a dwarf,” and this was reflected in the modern novel.<sup>53</sup> Marx had appreciated Balzac immensely, and like Marx, Lafargue preferred the latter’s realism to Zola’s “passive empiricism.” Engels, too, considered Balzac “a far greater master of realism.” Balzac had provided a complete history of French society between 1816 and 1848, of the rising bourgeoisie and the vulgar moneyed upstarts. Despite his sympathy for the doomed aristocracy, he recognized the necessity of its downfall. His ability to see “the real men of the future where they were to be found” was the great triumph of his realism.<sup>54</sup>

In his attacks on the bourgeoisie, Zola had described a class struggle between miners and mine owners, explored the class origins of prostitution and adultery, investigated the monopolistic development of commerce, and in *L’Argent* had described the “bestial” power of money. His anticapitalist bias was clear. But he was not a Marxist, and both Engels and Lafargue may have felt the point should be made clear. (Lafargue’s essay, published in 1891, did not anticipate Zola’s condemnation of the army and the government in the Dreyfus affair; hence Lafargue’s criticism did not endear him to Dreyfusards. Nor could he have anticipated Zola’s novel *Labor*, published in 1901, a

Fourierist exaltation of human harmony.) Lafargue rather saw the novelist as a paradox: a bourgeois opposed to his own class.<sup>55</sup>

*L'Argent* illustrated these themes. It revealed the author's qualities, and particularly good was Zola's description of the Bourse's role in society. Revealed too were the author's faults: his "prudence" and "lack of perspective," the absence of any "conception of society," his failure to appreciate the role of the press, and his "tiresome writing." Especially criticized was *L'Argent*'s "vulgar fatalism" and sense of predestination. Lafargue accused Zola of not knowing those parts of the work of the physiologist Claude Bernard that credited the environment with exerting a decisive influence on psychological elements. Zola's conclusion—that if society wished to free itself of crime it had to get rid of the beast within the man—implied that the individual alone was responsible for his acts. Balzac, on the other hand, had placed emphasis on the exterior world and had not feared to analyze "the thousand complex causes" the prospect of which apparently frightened Zola. But at least the latter was brave enough to investigate social forces and describe their economic consequences.

It was Lafargue's insistence on truth in the novel, especially in the social novel, that accounted for his major criticism. By truth he meant more than a description of reality. That was superficial and gave only the appearance of reality. Truth required analysis and generalization by the writer. "The writer who does not philosophize is only an artisan." According to Lafargue, naturalism, the equivalent in literature to impressionism in painting, forbade reasoning and generalization, requiring the writer to remain passive, only to register and render sensations without going beyond them. He was not to analyze causes or denote the consequences of events; his ideal was the production of a photographic image. Zola's method, Lafargue said, called for little previous study and small expenditure of intellectual energy. Balzac, on the other hand, "philosophizes at every opportunity about everything"; he thought deeply and his characters show it. If literature was to be art, it had not only to describe but to typify and to explain.

Zola's descriptions were erroneous as well as superficial. Balzac had written only after living in and associating with the societies to be portrayed, and he was accordingly realistic. Zola, on the other hand, only paid visits. Novels about miners or farmers had required "a week" spent in a mining or farming region, supplemented by documentation and interviews, and hence they constituted more journalism

than art. (A prominent twentieth-century Marxist critic would agree that Zola, unlike Balzac, was “isolated from the social life of his time” and was “a mere spectator” unable to “realistically master reality.”)<sup>56</sup>

Zola’s subject, moreover, was more often than not prompted by events, as *L’Argent* was prompted by the crash of the Union Générale bank. Without taking time to study his subject but taking it in only at a glance, his story, like his description of the Bourse, was superficial: he was content with hasty investigation and secondhand information. Balzac was capable of “profound and magisterial description, enabling us better to understand the nature of the action described,” but Zola—and Flaubert and the Goncourts as well—“thrive on brilliant description . . . drafted often in advance and kept carefully in a drawer for eventual use . . . demonstrating the author’s great art of exposition, [such descriptions] are in themselves only a useless and laborious accessory which damages the interest of the book.” Still, Lafargue concluded, Zola’s novels were literary records of the epoch, and his success was deserved; he was, compared with the “pygmies” around him, “a giant.” If he failed to shed light on the antagonisms of capitalist society or to show their development and consequences, at least he invoked them, and with Zola the working class had made its appearance in literature.

Lafargue then asked whether Zola’s novels represented the supreme attempt of bourgeois writers to rejuvenate their creation of the novel or whether these writers were condemned to tread the path of their predecessors, to use old formulas updated only by changes in detail. If the latter, the novel as an art form was exhausted and would go the way of epic or tragedy. A reply was promised in a subsequent article.

It never came. Lafargue had been elected to parliament. He left prison and was to reimmerge himself in politics and propaganda. In its brief biographical portrait of its candidate, the politically militant POF was proud of its candidate’s literary accomplishments and his appearance in some of France’s most prestigious journals. Lafargue was not to return to criticism until revolutionary socialists began to publish their own reviews, but even then he was too caught up in politics to give it full time. Like his other literary criticisms, aside from the study of Hugo, they would be ignored by critics and readers alike.<sup>57</sup>

## 11 The Myth That Seems Absurd

In late 1893 Lafargue began to write for a new Marxist journal, *L'Ere nouvelle* (*The New Era*). It had been founded and was edited by Georges Diamandy, the son of a Romanian politician and a convert to Marxism while studying in Paris. According to its “Declaration” in the first issue on July 1, it sought to infuse literature with a revolutionary socialist message. Because current French literature was “too careful” and “respectable,” an alternative was found necessary. Thus Diamandy differed from such Guesdists as Charles Bonnier, who would postpone all art to a future socialist society to achieve validity. Among the contributors were Plekhanov, Edward Aveling, and Deville; and although the journal was concerned with Marxist philosophy and analysis, it published reviews, poems, accounts of congresses, *chroniques*, and coverage of the local (1894) elections. *L'Ere nouvelle* was to survive for only seventeen months, but it made possible, for the first time in French, the publication of some important texts of Marx and Engels, and of Kautsky and Plekhanov. It was the first theoretical journal in France comparable to *Die Neue Zeit*.

On the editorial staff, which he joined after his conversion to Marxism, was Georges Sorel. Sorel had resigned from an engineering post three years earlier at the age of forty-five. Concerned with moral renewal, he had read Proudhon and others during long years of civil service duty in provincial towns. In the numerous articles he contributed to the review, Sorel analyzed the chief issues of Marxist theory, which he tried to reshape to avoid the “sterile confrontation” between idealism and mechanical materialism. He was associated with Italian Marxists, particularly Antonio Labriola, an established Hegelian philosopher in the 1880s who was won over to Marxism. In these years, now acknowledged as significant in the history of Marxism, Sorel worked to promote the introduction of a more authentic (i.e., less mechanistic), revamped Marxist thought from Italy and Germany.<sup>1</sup>

For Sorel’s admirers, it was only as a result of this journal—and its

successor, *Le Devenir social*, which similarly provided an outlet for him and Labriola—that Latins were able “to seize Marxism” from such “popularizers” and “slogan makers” as Lafargue. Consequently, for Sorelians, not until the 1890s was “true” Marxist theory understood.<sup>2</sup> His colleagues first saw Sorel as a bourgeois rebel, but as his defense of Marxism made an impact, they granted him more serious recognition. However, even Sorel’s early articles showed concern with what he saw as the decline of bourgeois culture; he seemed more interested in Proudhonian moralism, and in the perception of decadence that accounted for it, than in Marx’s economic determinism.<sup>3</sup>

The review published less-well-known Marxist texts, such as Laura’s translation into French of Engels’s study of Ludwig Feuerbach (in its April and May 1894 issues). Engels appeared pleased with *L’Ere nouvelle*, and Lafargue predicted that its impact on the French movement would resemble that of Engels’s *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*.<sup>4</sup> Subsequent issues carried extracts from Engels’s *Origin of the Family*; assorted writings of Marx, including the *Communist Manifesto*; and commentaries on the works of the more important social theorists of the time: Brunetière, Durkheim, le Bon, and Pareto. Lafargue republished the lectures he had given in 1884 on Marx’s economic materialism and his study of the French language before and after the French Revolution. He also published a revamped defense of socialism against the attacks of social Darwinists, especially those of Herbert Spencer.<sup>5</sup> But he soon returned to more theoretical concerns, specifically an investigation into the role of myths in human society and an attempt to provide mythology with a materialistic basis.

Lafargue had long been interested in biblical accounts of what he saw as prehistorical realities, and in 1870 had published three articles on the contradictions among them.<sup>6</sup> The prestigious *Revue bleue* in 1890 had planned to publish an article on what Lafargue called the “myth of Adam and Eve,” but for reasons still not clear it failed to do so. First published in the German party’s theoretical journal, the article finally appeared in French in the July 1894 issue of *La Revue socialiste*.<sup>7</sup> Rather than see the Bible either as literal truth or as fiction, as had eighteenth-century rationalists, Lafargue considered Scripture as myths containing “kernels of reality.” (329) Associating intellectual with historical development, he postulated that “the myth that seems absurd to us appeared, on the contrary, as simple and natural to the primitive man who imagined it and accepted it. Rather than “impostures” or “flights of the imagination,” myths were “naive and sponta-

neous forms of human thought.” (331) Here Lafargue displayed familiarity with English anthropological studies, particularly those of Andrew Lang, which purported to describe similarities in the myths of ancient Greek, African black, Native American, and other primitive societies. There were also references to James Frazer’s *The Golden Bough*, a study of comparative religion that appeared in 1870 and whose attempts to trace myths to rituals had aroused widespread interest. Lafargue believed it probable that by studying the customs of these peoples one might reproduce “the prehistoric environment in which the primitive religions were born [and understand] the phenomena which contribute to the elaboration of their legends and their myths.” (332) Put another way, the story can reveal something important about the culture from which it came. Consequently, Lafargue moved beyond eighteenth-century materialists who dismissed Scripture as fable.

For example, God’s creation of Eve from Adam’s rib, as described in Genesis 2, and Zeus’s taking of Dionysos from his thigh and Athena from his head attested to the androgynous nature of both Adam and the race of bisexual giants each of whom had four legs, four arms, and two heads, and hence colossal strength and endurance to make war on the gods of Mount Olympus. To protect himself against their strength and insolence, Zeus divided the giants into two, thus producing human forms. Similarly Adam, described in the Talmud as a giant, was reduced in size by God to more modest dimensions at the request of the angels, who feared him. In both cases, Lafargue argued, these events constituted the mythical counterpart of primitive mores when sexual relations took place within the tribe, when the endogamous hordes reproduced among themselves and so collectively were hermaphrodite.

Similarly, new sexual mores, which brought an end to incest, had their mythical counterpart in the story of Noah, who “begat” three lines. In this epoch, the “children of God” began to search outside their own horde for wives among “the daughters of man”; that is, they were no longer endogamous. (354–355) The point here is that Lafargue broke with such eighteenth-century critics as Voltaire, whose ridicule of Genesis revealed his inability to grasp its mythical sense. (357)

The familiar Adam and Eve myth, related in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 of Genesis and interpolated in the course of the first Genesis story, was for Lafargue “a patchwork of legends formed in different places in successive epochs.” (358) The tree of knowledge had its equivalent in



primitive taboos. Eve's fall was a reflection in myth of the transformation from the matriarchal to the patriarchal family. (366–370) The murder of the shepherd Abel by the farmer Cain represented the passage from pastoral to agricultural life, and these stories had their counterparts in Scandinavian and other epics. "The myths," Lafargue concluded, "that naive form of thought, was the only means that Humanity had at her service to preserve from oblivion the phases of her childhood." (384–392)

Engels found the article (when first published in 1890) "witty" and conceded that "there is obviously some truth in it."<sup>8</sup> He could scarcely reject the view that myths and even artistic works represented historical antecedents. In his *Origin of the Family*, Engels had shown how impressed he was, as Marx had been, by Morgan's interpretation of Euripides' *Oresteia* and Homer's *Odyssey* as dramatic representations of the conflict between declining rights of the mother, once "freer and more respected," and the new male domination that triumphed in the heroic age. To Kautsky, however, Engels admitted to a preference for Lafargue's interpretation of Zola, that is, for his literary criticism, over his "prehistoric theories which by no means are always water-tight."<sup>9</sup>

Certainly there was no anthropological evidence to support Lafargue's contention, based on linguistic speculation, that the common ancestors of all the Semites "had on the edge of the Orient a delightful garden [but] no men to work the land" (based on Genesis 2:5), and that to procure laborers they called on the Adam horde, "still savage [and] leading the woodland life of their first ancestors [who] appeared to them as vile as 'the dust of the ground.'" (364) Instead of providing evidence, Lafargue relied on similar myths, drawn from other societies. Thus "the tree of life" in the book of Genesis was doubtless "an ancestral plant": like the *Reiva*, the tree that in Mithraism "gives birth to the human race"; like the "carved image of a tree" found on Chaldean tombs; like the adoration of the cypress by the Babylonians and the Assyrians, as revealed by their monuments, which "represent [the cypress] as guarded by two genii, in much the way the 'Tree of Life' was guarded by cherubim after the expulsion of Adam from his earthly paradise," as told in Genesis 3:24. (367)

In spite of his qualms, Engels urged Kautsky to publish the draft article in the *Die Neue Zeit* and, in a final comment, declared that although rudimentary, it at least marked a departure from the outdated, rationalistic German philological approach. Similarly, twenty

years earlier Jenny Marx had also recognized her brother-in-law's tendency to go beyond the facts in forming his interpretations. "I fear, however, that in his capacity of *gens de lettre*," she had written to her father, "he will cut up the facts in order to thicken his own sauces [with them]. Unfortunately, he is too fond of literary gravy." Kautsky did not require much urging. He had already shown considerable interest in anthropological matters and, indeed, had published articles on the communist societies that Native Americans presumably established. *Die Neue Zeit*, after all, was dedicated to bringing "people to consciousness of what Marxism is and is not," and Lafargue was providing a materialistic basis for mythological studies.<sup>10</sup>

Lafargue made use of known facts about primitive societies to explain their legends in another critical article, "Le Mythe de l'immaculée conception." Myths in Babylonia and classical antiquity showed that virginity and maternity were not mutually exclusive; they symbolized man's wish to dispossess women of their goods and of the superior rank they held in the matriarchal family. These myths were first elaborated when men challenged the authority of women by insisting on a more limited role for them in procreation. The myths were revived in a much later epoch when ancient society was tottering, when the patriarchal family was collapsing, and when Greco-Roman women were freeing themselves from the marital yoke and claiming no need of male intervention in order to conceive.

But theirs was a short-lived triumph; with the advent of Christianity, women soon lost the rights they had begun to regain. Lafargue concluded that in gathering and blending the myths of previous peoples, Christianity developed its own compilation, however mixed and broken by Roman domination. Impelled by their wish to rob women of their great role as generator (*génératrice*), theologians claimed that women only played a passive part as "receptacle."<sup>11</sup> Although Lafargue made it clear that he was critically analyzing "the Christian legend" of the Virgin Mary, mother of Christ, Sorel maintained that while original in highlighting the importance of myth, Lafargue had confounded the immaculate conception with the virginal birth of Christ.<sup>12</sup> Admittedly, while his analyses contained bold hypotheses, Lafargue's insistence on conditional factors as basic causes was not always accurate.<sup>13</sup> Although the reasons for the journal's demise are unrelated to any inaccuracies by Lafargue, *L'Ere nouvelle* did not last out 1894. Sorel was later to blame independent socialists, strong in the

Chamber of Deputies, and particularly Millerand, for boycotting it, presumably for its orthodox Marxist stand, but the nature of their objections was not made clear.<sup>14</sup>

After the disappearance of *L'Ere nouvelle*, a new review, *Le Devenir social* (*The Social Process*), also essentially orthodox in its Marxism—and also short-lived—was founded. In its first issue, that of April 1895, it identified itself as “an international journal of economics, history and philosophy.” It published articles by French and foreign writers, and contributors included not only the familiar names of Sorel and Aveling, but those of Enrico Ferri, William Morris, and Peter Lavrov.<sup>15</sup>

The review was founded by Alfred Bonnet, the former secretary of *L'Ere nouvelle* and the director of the Giard and Brière publishing house (which was responsible for the editorial process), together with Lafargue, Deville, and Sorel. The necessary money, or part of it, may have come from Deville, who had independent means.<sup>16</sup> *Le Devenir social* continued on a broader and more sophisticated level the approach taken by its predecessor. Lafargue was now writing at a furious pace, and the articles in *Le Devenir social* were all original and not simply republications of earlier works.

Even more than its predecessor, *Le Devenir social* opened its columns to foreign intellectuals, chiefly Italian, German, and Russian Marxists. In addition to those mentioned, Kautsky, Bernstein, Vandervelde, Plekhanov, Labriola, and Croce all contributed. Themes addressed included the history of societies and how and why they changed, and the relationships between property and law, utopia and progress, and science and socialism. Accordingly, a variety of views were represented, and agreement was reached only on general historical materialism. The review made an effort to publish texts of Marx and Engels but remained largely a vehicle for theoreticians. Concrete analyses, in economics and sociology, were virtually nonexistent; instead, reflections and speculations on broad problems, in the widest philosophical sense, predominated. There was little commentary on actual movements, little historical research, and little effort to understand the contemporary course of events. And the review exerted marginal influence.

Like *L'Ere nouvelle*, *Le Devenir social* was also held suspect by reformist socialists. Sorel charged that Millerand, then editing the leading reformist socialist newspaper, *La Petite République*, would not permit publication in his newspaper of a notice announcing the ap-

pearance of the new review. *Le Devenir social* was to survive for four years, until brought to an end in the revisionist-reformist crisis at the turn of the century. It would serve as the chief instrument of Marxist thought in France—and Italy—and lead to a better understanding of orthodox Marxism. For its defenders, it proved more important than its predecessor in the history of French Marxism, because (thanks to Italian contributors such as Labriola and the young Croce) it made possible, in historian Daniel Lindenberg's words, the "crystallization of a Latin Marxism [as an] alternative to the ossification of Marxism by German social democracy." A third of the articles and reviews was written by Sorel, who used a variety of pseudonyms.<sup>17</sup>

The orthodox view was defended by the Lafargues. Laura was doubtless responsible for the translation of Engels's "Contribution to the History of Primitive Christianity" that appeared in the April and May issues of 1895.<sup>18</sup> In the first issue, Lafargue published a study of the origins of landed property in Greece; in the fourth, one on Tommaso Campanella, the Italian Renaissance philosopher and writer, whose *City of the Sun* gave an account of a utopian community; another on criminality; yet others on the work of the Jesuits in Paraguay, on the "myth of the Immaculate Conception" previously noted, and in an important article in 1897, on the Bourse.

Eight years earlier, in his article on the French language in *La Nouvelle Revue*, Lafargue had linked romanticism with bourgeois ascendance. In the July 1896 issue of *Le Devenir social*, he now explored the beginnings of the romantic movement and specifically rejected the romantics' view of human nature as unchanging, insisting once more on the effect that milieu made on character.<sup>19</sup>

As in many other areas, Lafargue was influenced by the personal as well as the ideological preferences of his two mentors. Marx and Engels had both admired the eighteenth-century Enlightenment (even though they had passed beyond its basic materialism), which for Engels was "the highest achievement of the French intellect both in form and content." Marx had rejected French romanticists and had particularly disliked Chateaubriand, who he said "incarnated French vanity . . . in romantic dress," embodied "false depth," "toyed with emotion," and produced an "unparalleled hodge-podge of dishonesty." He again found Balzac superior, although Marx could understand why stylistically Chateaubriand was "bound to become the rage in France."<sup>20</sup>

Still, Lafargue saw romanticism not as the "barbaric and misshapen

monster imported from abroad,” as both “reactionary nationalists and contemporary critics” would have it, but as the work of the victorious bourgeoisie who “pushed to the background the literature of the aristocrats.” Its origins, he insisted, lay not in the movement of the 1820s and 1830s but in the period of *Atala*, *Le Génie du Christianisme*, and *René*. To understand Chateaubriand’s great success, Lafargue, again defining literary criticism as applying the materialist critique of history, set out to re-create the “social climate” of the reading public between 1795 and 1804.<sup>21</sup>

For him *René* was representative of a generation; “the grandiloquent autobiography, bombastic, deceitful and yet professionally truthful [account] of these *damnés de l’ambition*, the young squires and young bourgeoisie of 1802.” The postrevolutionary epoch had opened the way to romanticism, to the “era of the serious, the melancholy, the sentimental, [to] grandiose images and sensational descriptions [but] lacking gaiety, skepticism, banter . . . False sentiment and grandiloquent expression were the characteristics of romanticism since its origins . . . and could be nothing else because it was the literature of the bourgeois class.” As in all his critical essays, Lafargue was interested in literature as historical documentation of the history of societies, as “mirror-like works reflecting men in their social milieu with their manner of seeing, feeling, thinking and expression.”

Lafargue’s attack against romanticism was in part the attack of the materialist against the idealist, but it was also a condemnation of style. He despised literary posing and criticized the romantics for what he called their idealistic sloganeering, for what he saw as their empty formulas and their pretension, which he attributed to their belief in passions that had endured “over the centuries.” On the contrary, he wrote, the “manner of living of each class stamps sentiments and human passions with its own form. Man in fact was not the unchangeable being of the romantics and moralists.”<sup>22</sup> For Lafargue, society, with its classes and its psychology, was the canvas on which an author’s individual talent puts its own design, a talent that in turn is shaped by the family and the school, by the literary and philosophical context. And whether a work was successful also depended on the society of which it was the reflection.

Hence Lafargue rejected “bourgeois” critics who saw a work of art as a consequence of free creativity; it was rather a form of human activity, subjected like others to laws of social development. As Lafargue observed, “the writer is riveted to his social milieu; whatever he

does he cannot escape nor isolate himself from the surrounding world; he cannot cease to submit to the influence of his origins, and—in spite of himself—whether he dives into the past or dashes into the future he cannot go further than the ideas of his epoch permit . . . It is his contemporaries who give the writer his ideas, his characters, his language and his literary form.” The writer’s brain was not a God-given instrument but rather “a crucible” enabling facts, sensations, current opinions, and past memories to meet, to combine, and to emerge as the spoken, written, painted, or sung work.<sup>23</sup> If society, then, created the objective conditions of genius, it was the role of the Marxist critic to distinguish the characteristic traits of that society, and particularly of that class, whose needs, hopes, and struggles, or absence thereof, the writer translates.

Regardless of Engels’s congratulations at the time of Lafargue’s publications in *La Revue philosophique* and *La Nouvelle Revue*,<sup>24</sup> these articles were ignored by the literary and academic establishment (and for that matter by most French Marxists). We have seen that of Lafargue’s works on literary criticism, only the 1885 article on Hugo was popular, and that was largely a *succès de scandale*. The first mention of Lafargue in a history of French literature was not made until 1967, by Pierre Moreau, who gave him a few lines in his *Critique littéraire en France*. Roger Fayolle, a Marxist critic, referred to Lafargue and other socialist critics in his *Manuel d’histoire littéraire de la France* published ten years later.<sup>25</sup>

These examples suggest that while Lafargue was interested in literature by inclination, as a revolutionary he saw that he could carry Marxist analysis to an area where the founders of “scientific socialism” had not ventured or had only posed some “landmarks.”<sup>26</sup> One sympathetic observer has concluded that Lafargue’s object was “to expose the pretensions of the bourgeoisie, to strip it of its literary disguises and esthetic ornaments, to attack it on all grounds, to dethrone it of its spiritual glory [and] destroy its illusions and prestige.”<sup>27</sup> Hence the combative character of his criticism; a literary critic with an intransigent loathing of capitalism could scarcely see literature as an independent sphere but rather would see it as a “representation of bourgeois society,” as a “product of social conflict,” and, for the class in power, as an “instrument of domination.” But in seeking to discredit the formulas, Lafargue exaggerated his attack and often threw out the baby with the bathwater. Like Diderot, who might have made similar analyses and similarly possessed “a rigorous determinism,” he

had put everything on the plane of pure scientific reasoning and had tried to explain the development of life entirely on a naturalistic basis. His philosophy was materialistic in that it considered the universe to be composed only of matter (which, however, does not mean that either Lafargue or Diderot worshipped only material values and lacked ideals).<sup>28</sup>

Thus Lafargue's literary criticism was narrowly based: aside from studies of writers like Hugo and Daudet, it explored only the French language, folklore, romantics like Chateaubriand, and naturalists like Zola. And that was all. He believed literature was a useful subject of study because "a literary work, even if not artistically valuable, acquires a high historical value. From the moment it is consecrated with success, the materialist critic can study with the certitude of studying from life the impression and opinions of contemporaries."<sup>29</sup> Lafargue was also aware of how literary criticism could be a weapon in the class war. The bourgeoisie was proud of its intellectual glory, and its idols had to be attacked. Lafargue saw literary criticism no longer as an "insipid excessive rhetoric which distributed censure and eulogy, where one awarded prizes, and was good in and of itself," but as "a study of the materialist critique of history."<sup>30</sup>

Yet his dogmatism was not austere, for Lafargue never hesitated to modify his position. Nor was he rigorous or always logical; he moved in every direction, appeared interested in everything, charged into his subject, and feared nothing. In the view of one admirer, he was "sailing at the level of the clouds, questioning the stars . . . penetrating myths, destroying them, recomposing them."<sup>31</sup> And in focusing the attack on the ideological superstructure of bourgeois realities, Lafargue the activist and Lafargue the critic became one. He was the first French Marxist and, inasmuch as he anticipated such Marxist literary critics as Plekhanov and Mehring, one of the first Marxists anywhere to introduce social classes into literary criticism and to see literature as a reflection of social relations and as an ideological weapon of a preponderant class.

He never gave all his time to criticism, not even during the decade he was most involved with it, that of 1886-1896, and he never intended to produce an integrated system of criticism. But if his argument was not systematic, it was coherent. His sociology of the artistic personality was prone to error and simplistic, but Lafargue must be studied in his time: as one of the first to apply class analysis to works of art, he showed concern that the socialist movement had not pre-

pared a culture adapted to its ideology.<sup>32</sup> Lafargue saw the 1789 Revolution as a watershed and its effluence as decadent bourgeois literature. To be progressive, a bourgeois writer had to be writing before the bourgeoisie took power, and Lessing, Fielding, and Diderot qualified here (although Lafargue acknowledged the importance of Baudelaire and other critics of existing bourgeois society).

To describe the link between class realities and the work of art, Lafargue explored the sociology of past public readership, or, put another way, he brought his ahistorical political criteria to the literary domain. But in evaluating through a contemporary prism the deeds and words of over a century ago, he made a major error that led to others: excessive concentration on the life and acts of the writer-artist; literature as the representation of society; and disdain for the work of art itself. Regardless of his economic determinism, Mehring was to put chief emphasis on the work of art and draw different conclusions from those of Lafargue regarding romanticism and naturalism. In finding residues of feudalism in romanticism and in finding some attitudes typical of the lower middle class in realism, Mehring arrived at results that were more just: Hugo's politics, for example, had to be seen in the context of a preproletarian bourgeois radicalism.

Moreover, Lafargue's failure to differentiate among the diverse strata of the bourgeoisie (*grande*, *moyenne*, and *petite*) and his view of it as one reactionary mass, us versus them, were oversimplifications. This explains his view of romanticism as a "littérature de classe," issuing from bourgeois fears of losing its recent conquests. But the now dominant bourgeoisie was also borrowing some of the tastes and practices of the nobility in its efforts to stave off radicals, and was concluding alliances with the debris of the aristocracy. The petite bourgeoisie, moreover, threatened by competition and excluded from political power, was showing its own impatience with romanticism. Nor was Lafargue's assessment of naturalism capable of more sophisticated analysis: he saw it as an appendix of romanticism and hence as a mechanical succession, and here too Lafargue did not distinguish between the *grande* and *moyenne bourgeoisie*. If he saw naturalism as the work of the petite bourgeoisie, which was increasingly crushed by capitalist concentration and speculation and seeking reform, Lafargue rejected the entire bourgeois cultural heritage and estimated that the proletariat, held in ignorance by capitalism, could not create its own literature until after its liberation.<sup>33</sup>

Even so, Lafargue had not wasted his time as a critic. In an age of



positivism, he was one of the most active Marxist thinkers and one of the most symptomatic. Earlier critics had not used class analysis, although Madame de Staël and Taine studied the ties between literature and society. Regardless of his disproportionate emphasis on ideological values, Lafargue added a political dimension. The *Communist Manifesto* stated that a new society would emerge from the old, but said nothing about new esthetic values. Lafargue was a stimulating but uneven critic at the end of the nineteenth century, and it may be, as Madeleine Rébérioux has noted, that his iconoclastic approach was doomed to failure in France, where humanitarian literature was so deeply embedded in the popular consciousness.<sup>34</sup>

Lafargue wrote not only literary criticism but also on philosophy, history, ethnology, linguistics, religion, and economics. He was not expert on any one but knew a little about each, and as a Marxist he believed that the key provided by Marx was indeed universal.<sup>35</sup> He believed that he could contribute to the victory of Marxism by discovering proofs of historical materialism in a variety of disciplines, but failed to realize that it is easy to find a large number of relationships between religion, politics, literary developments, or social customs, on the one hand, and a mode of economic production, on the other; and that the relationship is not always causal. Nevertheless, Lafargue's importance lies in his propaganda and in his early application of criticism in a Marxist spirit.

As a groundbreaker, Lafargue had to use the tools available at the time. He was determined to create a class-based party, one distinct from left-wing liberals. This explains his sectarianism and sheds light on some of his judgments, especially his insistence on identifying a mechanistic connection between the social structure and literature. Literature, necessarily heterogeneous because it reflects the complexities of times and societies, was seen by Lafargue as the total and homogeneous expression of a given social class (romanticism, for example, as essentially bourgeois); and bourgeois culture was rejected as a whole (although such writers as Balzac were admired).<sup>36</sup>

Because he wrote too much, his work was uneven; and in spite of his writing schedule, he attended Parti Ouvrier congresses and on occasion spoke out. At the party's Romilly Congress in early September 1895, he denounced colonialism; at the following year's Lille Congress, he commented on Radicals who professed allegiance to socialism; and at the 1898 Montluçon Congress, together with Guesde, he won unanimous approval of a resolution rejecting military tribunals

in peacetime. He condemned anti-Semitism and nationalism as forms of reaction. And in 1896 Lafargue was the French representative at an international socialist workers and trade union congress, which asked that national parties be allowed autonomy in matters of agrarian reform.<sup>37</sup>

His primary concern remained constant: to fight ideological influences foreign to Marxism; to keep orthodoxy; and to oppose revision and reconciliation. He remained what William Cohn called the “defender of the faith” and Claude Willard termed “the vigilant guardian of doctrine.”<sup>38</sup> More so than Guesde, also a vulgarizer and propagandist, Lafargue wished to make Marxist fundamentals, however simplified, available, and his caustic style and taste for paradox accounted for brilliantly executed pamphlets. As polemicist, journalist, political speaker, and theorist, never lacking in audacity, he tried to apply Marxist methods everywhere: to myths, anthropology, literature, linguistics, and folklore. To show that private property was not a natural state of human nature, however, became a major and sustained preoccupation.

## 12 Pleasantries or Naïvetés

Why did Lafargue place such heavy emphasis on property? First, because of socialism's Marxist heritage. Inasmuch as socialist parties questioned the legitimacy of private productive property and proposed its collectivization, property was understandably a major source of socialist concern. Second, because new juridical forms of ownership were emerging: legislation regulating corporations had been enacted in 1856, 1863, and 1867. Finally, because the housing problem was worsening. Accordingly, socialists were eager to show, contrary to the view of their opponents, that private property had not always existed, was capable of further evolution, and would ultimately disappear.

Lafargue believed that after a successful revolution socialists faced three main tasks: to organize the power of the revolution and assure its defense, which would require arming and assembling workers in industrial centers, where resistance was bound to be strong; to satisfy at once the material needs of the people; and to overturn the capitalist order and lay the basis of its socialist replacement. Hence the tactical necessity of confiscating capitalist ownership. The transfer of buildings to the nation and the nationalization of department stores, for example, would encourage resistance to counterattacks by "reactionaries."<sup>1</sup> However, because he was "not a prophet," he could not provide the details about socialist society that his critics demanded: he could only suggest, for example, that if clothing from the nationalized department stores were given to workers, they could for the first time wear the quality material they produced.<sup>2</sup> To provide historical legitimacy for these claims and to clarify different forms of ownership, Lafargue began to study the history of property, revealing once more the relevancy of theoretical inquiry to political pursuits.

Again under the pseudonym of Fergus, he published an article in early 1890 on "the origin and evolution of property," which traced the development of the concept through various stages from primitive communism to "bourgeois" ownership.<sup>3</sup> Subsequent drafts appeared

in *Le Socialiste* in the months that followed. Laura translated it into English, and as “The Evolution of Property, From Savagery to Civilization,” it was published in pamphlet form by Swan Sonnenschein later in the year.

Foreign as well as French critics noted the originality of the theory and the diversity of the data. The *Daily News* and *Daily Telegraph* called attention to the section on primitive communism as a reply to Huxley’s attack on Rousseau and equality. The German Social Democratic Party published a translation in its *Sozialdemokratische Bibliothek*. The party organ, the *Sozial Demokrat*, in its issue of July 5, 1890, praised “Lafargue’s general reading and his special study of prehistoric times and anthropology” as qualifying him to write a history of property. It confidently recommended his work as “eminently constructive, suggestive and reasonable.” Italian and Polish translations followed. The *Fascio Operaio*, the official organ of the Italian Workers’ Party, in its July 27, 1890, issue, described the pamphlet as “an attempt to work out the history of property along the lines of the materialistic conception of history.” Five years later Lafargue revised and expanded the study, and together with a refutation by the liberal (i.e., free market) political economist Yves Guyot, the Librairie Charles Delagrè published a book-length French version.<sup>4</sup>

Lafargue argued that private property had not always existed: it developed in societies that laid stress on the division of labor, and issued from the need to satisfy individual claims without recourse to violence.<sup>5</sup> He made use of Morgan’s *Ancient Society* and Engels’s *Origin of the Family*, and was especially inspired by Morgan’s predictions, which had so excited Marx and Engels: that “the interests of society are paramount to individual interests, that the two must be brought into just and harmonious relations,” and that “if progress is to be the law of the future as it has been of the past . . . a mere property career is not the final destiny of mankind.”<sup>6</sup> Anticipating criticism, Lafargue noted in his preface that late-nineteenth-century social anthropologists shared a “functionalist” viewpoint, according to which societies organized themselves to function smoothly, and they largely dismissed Morgan as “a historical guesser.” Their fieldwork yielded monographs describing particular communities linked only in abstract ways. Hence it was (and still is) fashionable to reject the social evolutionism of a Morgan—although Morgan himself warned against oversimplified conclusions drawn from his views on social development.

Lafargue believed in a primitive society, in a sort of golden age or

lost paradise where everything was held in common. The only personal property consisted of objects attached to the individual. He had read several eighteenth-century works on the American Indians that popularized this “return to nature” theme: Joseph François Lafitau’s *Mœurs des sauvages américains comparées aux mœurs des premiers temps*, P. Charlevoix’s *Histoire et description générale de la Nouvelle France*, and John Gottlieb Heckewelder’s account of his journey to the Wabash in 1792, *The First Description of Cincinnati and Other Ohio Settlements*. Heckewelder was a Moravian missionary who, as assistant to the U.S. commissioner to the Northwest, had lived among the Indians of the Ohio Valley for fifteen years and saw it as a lost Eden. The Charlevoix history, Lafargue’s favorite, was especially influential.<sup>7</sup> Like the men of the eighteenth century, he was fascinated by America and the alleged virtues of the primitive society the new land embodied. These books contained references to “generous savages” and “happy barbarians.” The elementary communism the Native Americans practiced ensured the maintenance of equality; it also furthered fraternity and generosity, and so made a “mockery” of highly vaunted Christian charity, which by definition required religious faith to be operative. Like Rousseau, Lafargue believed that civilization spoiled all this, that it “condemned the proletariat to vegetate in conditions of life inferior to those of the savages.”<sup>8</sup> A return to communism would enable humanity to regain its lost happiness.

Informed by his reading of these experiences, and familiar with the work of the Jesuits in sixteenth-century Paraguay, Lafargue believed a return to this Eden was not only possible but likely. Why? Because each stage in the evolution of society—slavery, feudalism, and finally capitalism—had changed the form and content of property. Inasmuch as property forms had evolved through history, private ownership was not “eternal” or “natural” or “just”; and now contemporary “advanced” “concentrated” capitalism, by introducing collectivist institutions and mores, was preparing the way back to communism. With the help of the Marxist party, one awaited the moment of revolutionary change. Thus Lafargue sought to counter the view that the suppression of private ownership was but a utopian fantasy opposed to human nature and to show instead that the instinct toward ownership was not innate but *tout au contraire* had developed very slowly. Personal use was the essential condition of individual appropriation; otherwise the concept of individual ownership was foreign to primitive man.

Individual ownership or private property developed, then, from primitive communism, to family or “consanguine” collectivism, then to feudal (pledged) property, and finally to nineteenth-century bourgeois (contractual) ownership. The last was cemented by the French Revolution, which provided legal guarantees for private property but stripped peasants of such communal rights as their use of common land to collect firewood. Other societal and gender relations evolved accordingly. When land and its products were commonly owned, women tilled the soil. “As long as property was associated with subjugation,” Lafargue said, “it was left to women to administer. When, however, it became a means of emancipation and supremacy in the family and in society, men tore it from her.” This dispossession gave rise to the “heroic combats” women fought with such “desperate energy” that all Greek myth and earlier recorded history “preserved the memory of their struggle.” And this dispossession was a more radical innovation than the restitution of property to the community would be today. Once privately owned, property required protection: hence the invention of laws. Here Lafargue cited Locke, who had written that “where there is no property, there is no injustice.”<sup>9</sup>

Landed property, then, owned by the tribe, was initially communal. “The clan was all in all; the clan was the family; it was the clan that married; it was the clan, again, that was the owner of property.”<sup>10</sup> With the advent of grazing and farming, and consequently with the emergence of the patriarchal family, primitive communism began to disappear; and when the patriarchal family, in turn, disengaged itself and formed the modern nuclear family, it fell subject to individual ownership. For Lafargue, tribal communism had broken down because the growth of the productive forces within it came into conflict with existing communally owned property.

Lafargue’s conclusion? As history continued to unfold, the concentration of property and property relations were once more becoming unstable. As communal property of ancient origin had been converted into private property, private capitalist property was being turned into common property administered by the state; but before attaining this ultimate form, capital dispossessed the producer of his individual tools and created the collective instruments of labor.<sup>11</sup> The cycle is completed: capitalist expropriation of the individual proprietor leads to collectivism, which, in turn, brings about the return to communism. (But products individually produced for individual use appropriately belong to individual workers, and would remain their property.) Pro-

letarian collectivism, then, would replace capitalist collectivism. Humanity would “recover its lost happiness, and shed the evil interests, the base passions, and the egoistic and antisocial virtues of the *période propriétaire*.”<sup>12</sup>

As a condition of putting out the book, the publisher had insisted on attaching a refutation. It was provided by Yves Guyot, noted for his many denunciations of Marxism and the socialist movement. Did he deliberately choose to misunderstand Lafargue when he accused the latter of being an apologist for feudalism? Lafargue had tried to show that feudalism was a historic necessity; that by providing physical security it had permitted social life to function and had only become decrepit when economic development required new social and political forms. The basic contradiction between the communal character of production and the private—or capitalist—form of ownership then polarized society, enriching a few but increasing “the fateful character of proletarian misery.”<sup>13</sup>

Lafargue’s study indeed reflected wide reading. But he paid scarcely any attention to chronology; there was little sense of direction; and he provided few median summaries. As in his other theoretical works, there were floods of insight but insufficient evidence, despite the examples of primitive communism practiced by Iroquois Indians, prehistoric Greeks, Caroline Islanders, and German tribesmen, all cited in support of wide-reaching generalizations. He both reflected and strengthened the evolutionist concept (not surprising in this last decade of the nineteenth century) when he argued that ideas based on the eternal nature of private property were without historical foundation and that capitalist property was only the latest form of a long, unfolding process.<sup>14</sup>

French Marxist historians acknowledge that Lafargue was alone in the Parti Ouvrier to undertake research in and apply Marxist theory to political economy. Yet they fault him insofar as he seldom sought to describe specifically French conditions and dissect the structures of French capitalism. His vision was deemed simplistic, abstract, and insofar as he was convinced of capitalism’s ultimate fall, apocalyptic.<sup>15</sup> And, admittedly, the inevitability of revolution was proclaimed endlessly; the sense of fatalism was pervasive; and the catastrophic vision of a moribund capitalism did much to nourish POF members’ well-implanted belief in their messianic role in a revolution that was nevertheless spontaneous, a view fed by previous nineteenth-century revolutions.<sup>16</sup>

Also in 1895, in the first (April) issue of *Le Devenir social*, Lafargue published a study on the origin of landed property in ancient Greece. Stimulated to respond by the appearance of a book by Professor Paul Gueraud on the subject, Lafargue once more shouldered the burden of defending Marxist theory, and in the process criticized prevailing historical methodology. "They [establishment historians] know only the texts," he complained, "studied in themselves and for themselves; they do not know or they neglect the facts not consigned in graphic documents. This historical method had been carried to its most formidable accumulation of citations by erudite Germans." History was rather "a novel of the people"; and collections of notes, sentences pulled out of context, and isolated facts were "poor substitutes."<sup>17</sup>

Lafargue preferred to try another method of historical analysis: he again told his readers that he accepted in full Vico's view that history was the account of the birth and development of human societies and of their institutions, and that the study of language, mythology, and tradition—rather than of heroes or of supernatural forces—comprised techniques of legitimate historical investigation. Vico believed in the distinctiveness of historical periods but held that similar periods recur throughout history in the same order (if not in the same form), only showing the modifications imposed by new circumstances and developments.

Consequently, no document was to be accepted unless supported by facts gathered from the experiences of peoples placed in analogous situations. This not only provided a point of reference but, more importantly, permitted historians to find "first and general causes of events in the transformation of the economic context, which, while of human creation, dominates man and his social and political organizations." If no texts showed primitive Hellenes as savages, reliance on myths suggested similarities with other groups in similar stages of development, that is, in matriarchal and primitive communism.

Specifically, Lafargue rejected scholarly explanations that Hellenic Greece perished because of the adoption of agrarian socialism. The Greeks, he agreed, could not solve their agrarian problems: a concentration of ownership had pushed landless farmers to the cities. Trade and manufacturing, held in low esteem, were reserved for slaves and foreigners; and all this accounted for the imperialism that was practiced and the early stoicism (characterized as putting on a good face) that was preached. Forms of agrarian socialism were adopted. As a consequence, the rebellious dispossessed, the landowners who had



been denied use of their property, invited Macedonians and then Romans. Lafargue saw a lesson in this: "Propertied classes in antiquity, as in modern times, have always betrayed their country in order to retain their iniquitous privileges," and he cited as later examples the French aristocracy in 1789 and the French bourgeoisie in 1871 (who "preferred Prussians to proletarians"). They were the counterparts of ancient Greek property owners.<sup>18</sup>

Marxist writers throughout Europe, as Engels had ruefully noted, had planned to collaborate on a series of studies that together would comprise a history of socialism. In 1895 two volumes of monographs were published in Germany; they were edited by Bernstein and Kautsky, who also contributed, as did Mehring, Plekhanov, and Lafargue. Lafargue wrote two studies: one, as previously noted, on Campanella; the other on Jesuit establishments in Paraguay.<sup>19</sup>

Tommaso Campanella, the sixteenth-century Dominican scholar, was put in the context of popular medieval sectarian writing. His *City of the Sun*, like More's *Utopia*, reflected communist-oriented proposals to reform society, proposals that issued from such examples of collective ownership as the mir and the mark, and from the egalitarianism permitted by the religious arguments that came from translations of the Bible. Arrested and imprisoned for heresy and insurrection, Campanella spent twenty-seven years in Neapolitan prisons.

Lafargue wrote that Campanella, like other sixteenth-century thinkers, believed in the oneness of humanity and anticipated its political realization. In so believing, the priest unknowingly reflected, in a philosophical way, the economic imperative of the capitalist bourgeoisie of his age: the quest for national states. This, in turn, required the destruction of the autonomous cities and provinces, which impeded the free flow of merchandise and which preserved the local and corporate privileges that opposed the establishment of manufacturing. Campanella sought unity under papal auspices; he would rely on force, as had Dominicans during the Inquisition—although Campanella's goal, as revealed in *City of the Sun*, was universal harmony and communism. He could not realize, Lafargue said, that this unity would allow at the same time the triumph of the bourgeoisie, and it was their ascendancy, and not utopian republics, that would overturn feudal society. Benedetto Croce and other critics saw the study as superficial, as outside Lafargue's competence, and as based on inadequate information and consequently yielding hasty interpretations.<sup>20</sup>

And there is little question that the reductionism displayed here by Lafargue was inordinately crude.

In October 1894, Lafargue again replied to a critic of Marx, this time the Italian sociologist Vilfredo Pareto. When the publishing house of Guillaumin decided to print a French translation of extracts from *Capital* selected and annotated by Lafargue, it looked for two years for an economist in France to offer a detailed rebuttal. Finally, Pareto agreed to write a critical introduction.<sup>21</sup>

In his response, published as an article the following year, Lafargue charged Pareto and other bourgeois economists with having failed in their attacks against Marx's *Capital*. He boasted that his earlier reply to Leroy-Beaulieu had discredited the latter; he was now forced to ask another to reply, with similar results. After giving an account of Marx's career and listing *Capital*'s chief themes, Lafargue ridiculed Pareto for having accused Marx of poor logic and emotionalism and of having failed to define satisfactorily such terms as "use-value" and "exchange-value." Pareto himself had failed to provide definitions and missed the mark in discussing the productive process. Lafargue used the bulk of his space to reject the proposition that the "laws of bourgeois political economy are eternal." Because they were a human creation and had developed and changed, they were not as immutable as those of "astronomy." Monopolistic restrictions on competition rendered them all the more tenuous.<sup>22</sup> But Lafargue's defense omitted the nuances and subtleties that characterized Marx's own work: it minimized or ignored differences between constant and variable capital and between the quantity of surplus value and its rate of increase, and scarcely delineated the process of capital accumulation.

Similar themes appeared in subsequent articles. To reject criticism of Marx for having ignored the works of previous economists, he showed Marx's debt to Ricardo and Smith. In the December 1896 issue of *Le Devenir social*, Lafargue reviewed yet another anti-Marxist critique, in a book published by the social Darwinist Gaston Richard. In insisting on the presence throughout history of "communist personalities" and "individualistic personalities," the author revealed a no less crude reductionism than that displayed by early Marxist propagandists. Yet even though he ridiculed Richard's allegations, Lafargue was left with a vague unease that criticisms of Marx's theory of value had not been satisfactorily answered.<sup>23</sup>

In 1897 he published perhaps his most original contribution to the

debate over the theory of surplus value, which demonstrated that Lafargue was the only Parti Ouvrier member to contribute to value theory. He looked at the economic function of the stock market (Bourse) and concluded that it operated in such a way as to manipulate stock prices whenever interest rates deviated too far from the norm so as to equalize profits (the distribution of surplus value).<sup>24</sup>

As such, the article explored one aspect of a larger context: Lafargue's long-held view of the bourgeois state as "a machine cleverly organized to serve capitalist interests." The *grande bourgeoisie*, because of its financial power, could dominate the parliamentary republic: it bought members of parliament; it controlled the press; and it used the stock exchange to its own advantage. Lafargue had made clear his belief that "the enormous power of finance [was] indisputably the form that endows political power," and that the *grande bourgeoisie* made use of the state for its sole profit, regardless of any harm inflicted on the nation. That it governed in its own interest was shown by its tariffs and its imperialism—Africa and Asia constituted "a vast field" of bourgeois exploitation. In short, "the chief mission of the state [was] to defend the property of the possessing classes and protect their exploitation of the working classes," and he added that "its chief weapons lay in the army and the police."<sup>25</sup>

Lafargue's article on the Bourse was instigated by Engels's supplement to the third volume of *Capital*, which had been published three years earlier (in 1894). Engels implied that a new approach to analyzing the stock exchange was necessary because of developments in the thirty years since Marx launched his investigation. In a note added to Marx's reference to the formation of stock companies, he observed that the exchange now carried out new functions: to regulate capitalist competition, to raise huge amounts of capital, and to assure a fair and reasonable division of capital in the form of dividends, interest, and profit to shareholders.<sup>26</sup>

Specifically, Lafargue identified what he called the problem of "average profit" and explored the role of the stock market in allocating it. Marx, he said, had argued that capitalist profit rested on surplus value. But it would be an error to think that the profit of each capitalist depends only on the surplus value taken from his own workers. Different sectors of industry had not reached the same degree of technical development. Some still relied on extensive human labor power rather than on machinery. If capital invested in a less advanced industry yielded greater profit than that invested in a highly developed in-

dustry, it would flee the less profitable industry until profits in both reached approximate equality. This resulted in the creation of a profit rate roughly similar in all industrial sectors: the average profit, a concept Lafargue said was little known in France. In showing how the stock market permitted the constant flow of capital to areas of greatest return, he also described how capitalist ownership “depersonaliz[ed]” itself, that is, broke ties with specific industrial establishments and claimed rights of anonymous ownership.

However, Lafargue had confused the average rate of profit with the average rate of interest, and he equated the two when he concluded that “the economic function of the Bourse is . . . to restore to an average rate of interest or profit all the capital [invested] by lowering or raising the price of shares.”<sup>27</sup> The rate of interest, of course, depends on other factors, such as the supply of and demand for available capital. Hence in concluding that the Bourse tends to yield an average profit rate—and the distribution of surplus value—by permitting a flow of investment from one firm to another, he really meant that the stock market assures capitalist investments a return that approximates the average rate of interest.

In his introduction, Lafargue revealed that he was drawn to the subject of surplus value not only because it had come under such heavy criticism but because the founders of Marxism had acknowledged that additional work on the theory was necessary. In Chapter IX (on surplus value theory) of the first volume of *Capital*, Marx recognized that his law of surplus value seemed to fly in the face of experience, and he “promised to provide a solution at a later time.” Critics of Marx, Lafargue went on, such as the Italian economist and sociologist, Achille Loria, said Marx really had no answer and never intended to supply one.

Lafargue regretted that volume three of *Capital* only considered the matter through some scattered and incomplete notes left by Marx. He reminded his readers of Engels’s awareness of the “controversy” that had arisen over Marx’s surplus value theory and the former’s explanation that the process was historical and not simply logical, an observation inadequately appreciated by Marx’s critics. Engels believed that had Marx revised the third volume, he would have elaborated on the subject.<sup>28</sup> That Lafargue saw this as a responsibility bequeathed by Engels reinforced his determination to defend Marx’s economic theory. Also reinforcing his determination was Engels’s letter to the German economist Conrad Schmidt expressing appreciation for Schmidt’s

favorable review of volume three, a review that could be used as a reply to Loria. Engels had asked Schmidt to send a copy to Lafargue, "who is polemicizing with Loria."<sup>29</sup>

In his essay on the Bourse, Lafargue let it be known that before his death Engels had told Laura he was "preoccupied [by] this question during the last months of his life [and that] although weakened by illness, he worked out a statement of the theory . . . Unhappily, he was not able to write the work." Because the solution, Lafargue went on, lay buried with Marx and Engels, "it thus remains for the Marxists to investigate and interpret the economic phenomena which confirm the theory of value, the only theory which makes the evolution of human production intelligible . . ." Then followed a remarkable statement by Lafargue, often cited by his critics in their attacks on the "sterile" thought of Marx's disciples: "It is rash to meddle with the work of these two giants of thought [Marx and Engels] . . . Perhaps not until the transformation of capitalist society will socialists of both worlds be able to do more than popularize their economic and historic theories and apply them to new studies."<sup>30</sup>

Benedetto Croce dismissed Lafargue's warning not "to meddle." "The task of Marx's followers," Croce said, "ought to be to free his thought from the literary form which he adopts, to study again the questions he propounds, and to work them out with new and more accurate statements, and with fresh historical illustrations . . . [rather than provide] a series of little summaries which follow the original chapter by chapter and prove even more obscure."<sup>31</sup>

In his 1907 essay, *La Décomposition de Marxisme*, Georges Sorel also cited Lafargue's statement and added: "No one has considered that historical materialism might consist of the paradoxes, pleasantries or naïvetés of Paul Lafargue's writings on the origins of law, morality and religion." And Sorel condemned Karl Kautsky for publishing in *Die Neue Zeit* "almost all the nonsense which Lafargue has presented as applications of Marxism. He [Kautsky] has given these articles his complete approval, which contributed in no small way to the opinion that the Marxist school is ridiculous."<sup>32</sup>

Sorel had long complained of the reverential attitude displayed by Marx's disciples. Normally, he said, criticism works to develop the outlook of the master rather than to study the outlook itself. But "instead of expanding on the original effort [the Marxists] have surrendered themselves to so many fantasies that serious people have

generally not considered them to be authoritative interpreters of Marx. He has, consequently, remained shunned.”<sup>33</sup>

In December 1897, Sorel broke with *Le Devenir social*, his differences with Lafargue and other writers by then wholly irreconcilable. Increasingly critical of Parti Ouvrier orthodoxy, he had called for a “return to Marx” and yet had attacked the Feuerbachian origins of Marxist thought, holding Feuerbach responsible for Marx’s failure to recognize the centrality of moral renewal. Sorel rejected the likelihood of legislative means to transform bourgeois society, criticized the surplus value theory, and showed contempt for socialist politicians who seemed closer to their bourgeois counterparts than to the workers they claimed to represent. Doctrine, he believed, was subordinate to moral renewal, and he urged that as examples of heroism the focus be placed on the austerity and moral fervor shown by the early Christians.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, Sorel had wanted *Le Devenir social* to take a stand in the revisionist-reformist controversy then dividing German socialists, but the staff had refused. Lafargue called him a “heretic.” And aside from a brief (and unexplained) collaboration in 1903 with a journal that expressed the views of Guesde and Lafargue, *Etudes socialistes*, Sorel was moving toward revolutionary syndicalism. He was citing Bergson and hailing the “liberation of the will from intelligence” called for by the psychologist Gustav le Bon, who was studying the irrational factors in human behavior.<sup>35</sup>

Sorel charged Lafargue with having discredited Marxist methods of analyses by false applications that touched on the grotesque. More astute Marxist theorists of the 1890s, he insisted, had to explain that historical materialism was not what Paul Lafargue had said. Croce was cited as stating that Lafargue used historical materialism as a “barrel-organ” whose approach was “to take by a single scrap” subjects he was not expert in and repeat old refrains over and over. Sorel added that when expressing amazement at how “little noise” his discoveries made, Lafargue attributed his lack of acclaim to the ignorance and prejudices of bourgeois historians. And so Kautsky’s willingness to publish Lafargue’s presentations contributed to a caricaturing of the Marxist school and upheld Lafargue as an accredited representative of its philosophy.<sup>36</sup>

Other French contemporaries of Lafargue, sympathetic to a more broadly based definition of socialism, also found fault with the narrow materialist base employed by the Marxists. As early as 1889, both

Charles Andler and his colleague Lucien Herr, the librarian of the prestigious Ecole Normale, had broken with the Parti Ouvrier's collectivism, "because without belittling the character of Jules Guesde we believed he did not understand Marx, and because of the tyrannical nature of the group; the cynicism of his newspaper revolted us. The scandalous scientific inadequacies of a Paul Lafargue would have made us flee."<sup>37</sup> Yet while accusing Lafargue and the first Marxists of schematic simplification, these critics failed to recognize that in order to impose their views Marxists had to make their ideology known. Certainly, early Marxists believed that their first task was to wage an intransigent struggle against all forms of idealism, all utopianism. Put in this light, their tendency to exaggerate becomes understandable, similar to that of Marx and Engels, who believed they had to inflate the virtues of historical materialism when they first propounded the doctrine.<sup>38</sup>

Although Lafargue's comment on meddling was used to discredit him, it was not used to explain him. Like Engels, Lafargue was frustrated by his inability to stem the mounting criticism of Marx, especially of his surplus value theory. In his article on the Bourse, Lafargue seemed to admit that there was no easy solution to the contradictions raised by critics and that it was best to be empirical, that is, to determine whether "the evidence fitted the theory of value and its relationship to the rate of profit to sustain Marx's original judgments."<sup>39</sup>

By "not meddling" Lafargue did not mean giving noncritical reverence, as assumed by his critics. Authority, he said, lay not in the persons of Marx and Engels but in the theory, characterized as "the only theory which made the evolution of human production intelligible, since it has taken on its commodity form." Thus Lafargue was interested in seeking evidence and in postponing a final judgment. Let the historical process work its way, as Engels suggested in his "supplement," he urged, and more information will become available. Until then one can only "popularize the economic and historic theories and apply them to new studies . . ." Engels had expressed similar sentiments in refusing to rewrite Marx's *Capital* for the reader's convenience. To rewrite Marx, Engels said, as called for by the critics, would accomplish nothing; it would not convince the ill intentioned, and it would hurt those who wanted to understand and so required the original text. And Lafargue, so often admonished by Engels "to be more faithful to the original [because] Marx is not a man whom one can afford to treat lightly," preferred to have Marxists conform to the

theory rather than try to add to the work of the two “giants.” If Engels believed that he “lack[ed] justification for such a revision,” Lafargue could believe no less and would treat subsequent attempts to revise Marx similarly.<sup>40</sup>

As Engels had noted, Lafargue may be faulted for his poor assimilation of Marxism, and consequently for his inability to apply such analyses even to the economic depression of the 1880s. In his literary, philosophical, and anthropological studies, Lafargue provided materialistic explanations that were mechanistic and slipped into an easy determinism without considering the impact of all the social forces at work. Even so, Sorel and his admirers erred in denying the importance of Lafargue’s—and Guesde’s—historical role. It is not true that only in the 1890s was Marxism assimilated; the absorption of the basic ideas of historical materialism, surplus value, and the class struggle had taken place during the previous decade. Nor is it true that Sorel was the first French Marxist to reject “mechanical” and “superficial” determinism—and in so doing explore the philosophical foundations of Marx’s thought, as claimed by another enthusiast.<sup>41</sup> (Certainly Sorel’s interest in developing a “proletarian consciousness” and rejecting political organization as a substitute would not endure.) Lafargue’s entire attempt to undermine the basis of bourgeois values was an effort to psychologically prepare members of the proletariat to restructure their lives. If, as his admirers believed, it was an error for Sorel to have collaborated with Lafargue (the same Sorel would also associate all too easily with royalists, nationalists, and embryonic fascists at subsequent stages of his career), it is unclear why, given their mutual hostility, Sorel had remained affiliated with him so long.<sup>42</sup> In any event, during the time he was associated with *Le Devenir social* and professed orthodox Marxism, Sorel tried to apply what he saw to be a specifically Marxist interpretation to the social and behavioral sciences. These efforts came to an end in 1898, when in an article entitled “Crise du socialisme,” published in *La Revue politique et parlementaire*, Sorel launched an attack against his former Marxist colleagues. He accused them of subscribing to “le parti du ventre” (the party of the belly), praised such revisionists as Bernstein, and concluded with an ardent defense of anarcho-syndicalism.<sup>43</sup> Lafargue’s response is not available, but he could not have been excessively surprised.



## 13 Absurd and Incredible Conduct

The Parti Ouvrier and especially its representatives in the new legislature pushed ahead with its newfound reformism. Having replaced Lafargue as the most conspicuous spokesman for orthodox Marxism, Guesde proposed numerous domestic initiatives, ranging from the establishment of municipal pharmacies and grievance machinery in labor disputes to free postage for the military. Popular foreign policy programs were supported as well. As a political party leader and an elected deputy, he was aware of growing national feeling on the part of his constituents, and his campaign literature for Roubaix boasted of its author's patriotism. Guesdists approved funding such overseas ventures as the Madagascar campaign. Recalling the pro-German charges leveled at the POF, and appreciating the reluctance of French voters to turn the keys of national security over to internationalist-minded Marxists, Guesdists joined other deputies in protesting French participation in ceremonies scheduled for the opening of Germany's Kiel Canal in 1895.<sup>1</sup>

The syndicalist Hubert Lagardelle later described Guesde as "saturated with democracy." The Parti Ouvrier embraced the municipal socialism for which they had denounced the Broussists in the previous decade. Roubaix (since 1892) and Lille (to be won in 1896) were seen by *Le Socialiste* as "dictatorships of the proletariat in parts of France," and every capture of a city hall was viewed as amounting to "a revolution." Differences between Guesde and Vaillant (who similarly brought Blanquists to the support of the Republic), on the one hand, and reformists like Millerand, on the other, were diminishing. Revolutionary strategies became ever more subordinate to the legal conquest of parliamentary power. This "legalization" of socialism accompanied and issued from an awareness that where the suffrage could be used, as in western Europe, workers had more to lose than their chains. Guesde made this clear when he said, "If it is true

that at the beginning of the nineteenth century the proletariat had no country, then democratic evolution has given it one.”<sup>2</sup>

Lafargue subordinated any reservations he may have had to his long-standing concern with winning a broader basis of support and achieving socialist unity. He praised the socialist union put together in the Chamber and predicted, with its aid, a socialist victory in the forthcoming municipal elections of 1896. To achieve that goal, he told Deville (now virtually in the Independent camp and an associate of Millerand) that he, Lafargue, had won Guesde's agreement to his idea of gathering “influential militants of different parties . . . to decide on tactics in view of the situation created by the elections,” and he would write to Millerand in this vein.<sup>3</sup> At the POF's Romilly Congress in 1895, he pleaded for Marxists to join forces with other socialists for the coming elections. That his party approved was shown at the following year's Lille Congress, when delegates voted by acclamation their appreciation of the two “valiant founders.” And after the May 1896 municipal elections, Lafargue was able to tell Liebknecht that the results “surpassed our hopes” and that “the progress accomplished in four years is incredible.”<sup>4</sup> Socialists won majorities on councils in Marseilles, Lille, Roubaix, Dijon, Toulon, Limoges, Calais, and Vierzon, and gained significant minorities in Lyons, Bordeaux, Toulouse, and elsewhere.

Electoral successes convinced French Marxists that the new strategy worked, that revolution through the vote was imminent. Later in May, together with most other socialist factions, the Parti Ouvrier approved Millerand's Saint-Mandé unity speech, which professed collectivist goals but placed stress on reformist and patriotic themes, not even mentioning the word “revolution.” Guesdists qualified their approval but gave it. While accepting programmatic unity, however, they rejected structural unity and reserved the right to resume revolutionary tactics if propertied elements interfered with the results of free elections.<sup>5</sup> In 1888 Lafargue had insisted the capitalist state “would have to be smashed before a collectivist society could be realized.” Now he agreed the state could be peacefully transformed.

In late July (1896), Lafargue returned to England to attend the Second International's London Congress. On the way, he stopped at Lille and together with several foreign delegates, also heading for London, attended a reception given by the city's socialist administration. The 133-person French delegation represented every faction within the French movement, from Independents such as Millerand and

Jaurès to anarchists with trade union credentials.<sup>6</sup> Lafargue carried a mandate from the Socialist Federation of the city of Nantes (the cautious Brunellière asked for a confidential report) and brought with him his nephew, Jean Longuet. Eleanor Marx-Aveling also attended, representing the London Gas Workers Union and acting as a translator.<sup>7</sup>

The 776 delegates, who came from twenty countries (more than half, however, from Great Britain), met in the impressive surroundings of the Queen's Hall. The delegates once more took up the resolution that had been debated—and passed—at the International's Zurich Congress of 1893, the one requiring political action as a condition of future membership. Delegates not recognizing the necessity of political action, and hence anarchists, were not allowed to come. It again was approved, by a seventeen-to-two vote, with only the French (by a narrow 57-to-56 majority) and the Dutch delegations opposed and the Italians, equally divided, abstaining. Lafargue and the Marxists had fought against admitting those who rejected the need for disciplined party behavior and scientific socialism, and, above all, against those who rejected political, in contrast to economic, strategies.<sup>8</sup>

For anarchists, too, were changing their tactics, and in such a way as to reinforce syndicalist tendencies. Because of effective government repression of anarchist terrorists, such critics of "propaganda by the deed" as Kropotkin and Elisée Reclus had proposed finding mass support by infiltrating and controlling the trade unions, a process well underway by 1896. Thus it was that anarchists like Jean Grave, editor of *Le Révolté*, Emile Pouget of *Le Père Peinard*, and Pelloutier, now secretary of the Federated Labor Exchanges, came to London as trade union delegates. (The unions had received invitations because British labor unions had obviously not rejected economic organization and had to be invited.) The French delegation split over their inclusion: Allemane and Vaillant led those who supported their admission; Millerand, Jaurès, Guesde, and Lafargue, those who opposed.

The Parti Ouvrier delegates posed the question neatly: since socialists recognized the need to win political power as the preface to social transformation, was it logical to admit those who condemned political action? As we saw, the POF delegates were narrowly defeated. Even Jaurès, who had said there were many roads to socialism, refused to accept the defeat, and his speech condemning anarchism drew an ovation and brought him to the attention of the world's assembled socialists. Elected French socialists saw themselves as holding a higher mandate, and during an all-night session they decided to seek recognition

as a distinct group. Voting by nation, the Congress approved, and the schism between socialism and syndicalism in France was widened. Within the Nantes Federation, anarchists condemned Lafargue for having sided with those who insisted on political action alone.<sup>9</sup> With two separate French delegations, the Congress proved to be among the most chaotic held.

On Thursday, July 30, delegates at the Congress discussed the agrarian question and the response socialists should give. A resolution calling for an end to capitalistic exploitation, including “landlordism,” by socializing land “like the other means of production,” was tabled because the report on which the resolution was based acknowledged that conditions of land tenure varied so as to make a universally binding program impossible. The Belgian party leader, Emile Vandervelde, had contrasted England, with its large estates, industrial economy, and relatively few small landowners, with Belgium and France. He called for more study. And Lafargue agreed it was more important for workers to organize than to go into these details: in France, he pointed out, socialism was winning middle-class seats in the countryside. Another proposal, offered by George Bernard Shaw (after Lafargue’s lengthy remarks), requiring that all speakers be limited to three minutes, was defeated.<sup>10</sup>

A revolutionary minority within the Parti Ouvrier came to resent the Guesdists’ growing reliance on reformism. Although the party showed a united front, some militant socialists had already privately assailed their leaders. Police informants related how, at a private meeting held shortly after the formation of the union of socialist deputies, such activists as Lucien Dejean, from Toulouse, expressed disappointment with reform. They refused to accept Independents as real socialists and called for an end to affiliation with them. Reports in both Paris Préfecture and Sûreté Générale files reveal that the strongly Marxist Fédération de l’Est was unhappy with what it called the Workers Party’s evolution toward state socialism. This was confirmed by Zévaès. POF deputies, he said, were criticized for sacrificing principles to expedients in voting against repeal of the *lois scélérates* (the repressive legislation enacted in the wake of anarchist terrorism) and in upholding the all-Radical ministry of Léon Bourgeois; as a result, a gulf widened between these *militants* and the more moderate *élus* in the Chamber.<sup>11</sup>

German socialists, too, feared that their French counterparts, in their haste to appease voters, were catering to nationalist sentiment

and abandoning collectivism. Letters from Bebel and Liebknecht to Guesde and Laura Lafargue condemned the “shabby politics of coterie and personality” that were now stamping French Marxism. Guesde and Lafargue were accused of lacking international solidarity, as shown by their “disinterest” in recent industry-wide British strikes.<sup>12</sup>

If revolutionaries within the POF believed the party was veering too sharply in a reformist direction, independent socialists harbored no such fears. An early sign of discord appeared in 1897 in the administration of the newspaper edited by Millerand, *La Petite République*, which reflected his reformist socialism in its editorials but was open to all shades of socialist opinion. The infighting resulted in a short period of Guesdist control of the newspaper and Millerand’s departure from it (complaining of interference from a hostile publisher), and much of the animosity appears to have been inspired by a growing generation gap.<sup>13</sup>

The Marxists on the staff repeatedly tried to seize the newspaper, according to Georges Renard, the literary critic and historian associated with Malon and who was to succeed him as editor of *La Revue socialiste*. Renard, perhaps not the best witness because he had lost his job of writing features for *La Petite République*, said that on several evenings the printer received contradictory orders and did not know who was in charge. On January 20, 1897, an “exasperated” Millerand, Jaurès, and other Independent editors resigned and were replaced by the Parti Ouvrier chiefs. The February 5 issue carried Guesde’s name as chief editor and Lafargue’s as associate editor, and the embittered Renard called it the “triumph of Marxism in French socialism.”<sup>14</sup> The combined subscription to *La Petite République* and the Independent *Revue socialiste* came to an end; the newspaper now took a strictly Marxist line, and no longer welcomed all socialist opinions.

By May some semblance of harmony was restored. Guesde was aware he needed Independent support in the approaching election and had failed to raise adequate funding for the newspaper.<sup>15</sup> On May 18, 1897, *La Petite République* announced his resignation and the appointment of Léon Gerault-Richard, an ardent—and self-seeking—Radical who had come to socialism and to the newspaper four years earlier. Lafargue, however, remained resentful. He complained both to Jaurès and Guesde that “the owners of the *Petite République* drove us out without paying for work submitted”; to give his interpretation of events, he prepared a “circulaire confidentielle” for Parti Ouvrier members absolving himself and the other Guesdists of any wrongdoing.<sup>16</sup>

The rift was smoothed over in the Socialist Union, but the experience had shown cleavages below the surface, particularly resentment between the veterans, Guesde and Lafargue, and the “newcomers,” Millerand and Jaurès. Zévaès recalled that Guesde was “incensed” at a warm reception given Jaurès by some of Guesde’s oldest friends, such as the Parti Ouvrier organizer in Bordeaux, Raymond Lavigne. The *Petite République* episode also highlighted that moderates within the Workers Party were growing dissatisfied with the executive’s attitude. Delory, now mayor of Lille, had complained when he failed to see the names of Millerand and Jaurès listed as editors: the omission was a “mistake” and “it worries people up here,” he wrote Guesde. His letter closed with the warning that the withdrawal of the PO from the Socialist Union would be an error, as would its insistence on socialist internationalism. The city had hosted the Parti Ouvrier congress the year before, much to the resentment of local patriots. Delory had to ask for additional police, and the German visitors on one occasion had to exit through a back door. In a recent municipal by-election, he reminded Guesde, two socialist candidates went down to defeat despite their protestations of patriotism.<sup>17</sup>

Early in 1896, Lafargue was initiated into the Perreux branch of the secret fraternal labor organization known as the Order of the French Knights of Labor (La Chevalerie du Travail Française, or CTF). His motives are not clear; at the time he was not involved in any local activity in Le Perreux—and his involvement with the Parti Ouvrier was only at the highest levels of leadership. Since his return to France from England fourteen years before, Lafargue had never played much of a role in local politics aside from posing his candidacy; he never participated in organizing a strike or in celebrating the Commune. He may have regretted such omissions and accepted an invitation to join.<sup>18</sup> Then, again, his admiration for British trade unionists and the strikes they successfully waged may have prompted his decision. In any event, his affiliation with a labor—as opposed to another socialist—group sheds light on a certain anarcho-syndicalist tendency, regardless of his commitment to orthodox Marxism, a tendency that would become more noticeable in his remaining years.

According to its constitution, the CTF glorified labor, which secured the “fruits of the earth for mankind” and which enabled man to “acquire wisdom and science.” It envisaged labor as the “real philosopher’s stone” because of its capacity to generate wealth.<sup>19</sup> Still, Lafargue never repudiated the beliefs expressed in *The Right to Be Lazy*, his conviction that it was the wage labor made possible by capital-

ism that stultified and degraded human beings. Founded in 1893, the Chevalerie called for workers' emancipation and for their "accession to the administration of private property." It was not Masonic, although many Freemasons were members and numerous rites and rituals were observed. The U.S. model, the American Knights of Labor, served as a prototype, before it went public and national, changing from a working-class organization to a middle-class reform society.<sup>20</sup> However, the CTF limited recruitment to those workers who had demonstrated competence, which, in turn, was demonstrated by the posts of responsibility they held.

Like the early Knights of Labor, the CTF saw the redemption of labor chiefly as a nonpolitical process. Labor was to reassert itself by taking advantage of the self-help and education available in labor exchanges and trade unions, which would provide training in the use of strikes and boycotts. The CTF also spoke of sabotage and saw advantages in the general strike. The Chevalerie held a certain attraction for left-wing intellectuals, and among its members could be found anarchists, such as Pelloutier, and socialists sympathetic to anarchism, such as Briand. On the membership rolls were Charles Gros, a teacher-poet and militant from Troyes; Marcel Sembat, who came from a Blanquist background and was now associated with Millerand; and Brunellière. Also like its American counterpart, the CTF's structure was inspired by labor organization. Locals were called yards (*chantiers*) and were limited to twenty-one members. The leader (*grand maître*) was forbidden to hold political office. The CTF favored a new constitution for France based on direct government of the people and communal and regional autonomy, reflecting Allemanist and Blanquist themes.

However, the Chevalerie never became a trade union federation comparable to the Fédération des Bourses or the new Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT). Syndicalist, revolutionary, and antiparliamentarian, the Chevalerie sought to penetrate other organizations. But its numbers were too few to permit effective boycotts, and mainstream socialists like Jaurès dismissed it. The CTF was moribund after 1898; and after 1910, when subject to police infiltration and with the failure of the general rail strike of that year, it lost whatever influence it had. By 1911 it had disappeared. Having played no significant part in the establishment of the CGT or in the unification of the socialist movement, the CTF was largely forgotten until its career was resurrected by the French labor historian Maurice Dommanget. That La-

fargue became a member probably resulted from the same impulse that prompted his remark to the First International's 1872 Hague Congress: that he anticipated "the creation of an international federation of trades connecting beyond frontiers the trade union organizations." Still, Lafargue was not active in the CTF: Dommangeat could not place him at any congress and did not know whether he attended any meetings of his local.<sup>21</sup>

His association, then, was purely formal, although it was the Nantes *chantier* of the CTF that mandated Lafargue to represent it at the International's London Congress.<sup>22</sup> Certainly it was now rare (outside the Nord) for a POF leader to support any labor organization, especially one favoring the general strike. Did he do so because of his taste for paradox and a wish to scandalize his colleagues on the Parti Ouvrier's National Council? Or, as already suggested, was it the residue of anarchism, the traces of his earlier Proudhonism—as noted by Marx—that were again surfacing? Certainly he possessed the temperament and spirit of rebellion displayed by anarchists.

At the time of the 1898 legislative elections, signs of dissension between Lafargue and Guesde once more emerged. Lafargue's preference to pose his candidacy in Lille rather than for the Paris Municipal Council two years earlier has been noted. Police reports confirm that Lafargue had not wanted to sacrifice himself in a futile campaign but preferred to compete in the Nord.<sup>23</sup>

However, he had failed to secure enough party support from the socialists of the Lille-Tourcoing constituency to qualify as a candidate. Furious at the setback, Lafargue blamed the party's executive committee and above all Guesde, who, he said, should have known that he had no chance there. A Sûreté informer quoted Lafargue as blaming the executive for failing "to find an absolutely sure constituency . . . not far from Paris," and Lafargue himself wrote to Guesde accusing him of "tacit complicity" in the decision taken by the Lille socialists to "disdainfully" drop his candidacy.<sup>24</sup>

Lafargue was already upset with Guesde over differences regarding women's rights. The socialist feminist Aline Valette, a Parti Ouvrier member, had submitted a resolution to the 1897 POF congress calling for "a feminist program." She found it necessary because gender differences had created for them "a situation distinct from that of men": they were "doubly enslaved as producers and reproducers," and her resolution was supported by Lafargue and Paule Mink. Although Guesde agreed on the need for a reaffirmation of women's



rights, he denied the necessity of a programmatic change, arguing that previous congresses had settled the question, and the resolution was tabled.<sup>25</sup>

Lafargue's condemnation of Guesde and the National Council for his failure to qualify was very likely unjustified. Apparently both the party executive and the Federal Committee of the Nord had supported his candidacy; it was the socialists in the district who had not. Their reasons varied. According to a report of the special commissioner of Tourcoing, voters believed that as a deputy Lafargue had neglected his constituency. They showed hostility toward him (and Guesde) as Parisians and resented candidates "imposed" by the party leadership. The patriotism of Tourcoing socialists strengthened suspicion of Lafargue as a "Spaniard" or a "German." Finally, some took offense with Lafargue as "stingy" and as not "a man of his word."<sup>26</sup>

Two months later, in late March 1898, Lafargue initially accepted, and then rejected, candidacy as a municipal councillor for the second constituency of the Fifth Arrondissement in Paris. This was the Jardin des Plantes district where he had been defeated in 1887. Perhaps he foresaw the same result; perhaps he no longer found appealing a seat on the Municipal Council, after a stint in the Chamber of Deputies. Lafargue used the pretext of his mother's poor health to withdraw: it would, he said, prevent him from waging an effective campaign.<sup>27</sup> Personally based indignation with Guesde as well as differences with him over which strategy the party was to follow in the Dreyfus affair account for Lafargue's virtual abandonment of the political arena for the next year and a half. Of the twenty meetings of the National Council held between July 31, 1898, and February 28, 1899, he attended only two. According to Guesde's report to the POF's Epernay Congress, which Lafargue did not attend, he failed to appear at any of the 215 lectures and meetings organized by the executive council.<sup>28</sup>

Even had he run in a "safe" constituency, Lafargue would have done poorly in the 1898 legislative elections. Republican parties had tried to avoid the Dreyfus affair as an issue, and the agitation accompanying the case had furthered the nationalist and conservative cause, as had the charges of internationalism, even of employment as German spies, directed against Guesdists. The Progressist (moderate) center did not increase its plurality (250), but while Radicals won 178 seats, about 80 conservative *ralliés* and 15 Nationalists and anti-Semites, including Edouard Drumont, were elected. The disappointed socialists, who had expected so much after their breakthrough in 1893,

returned fewer than fifty candidates and so did not significantly increase their numbers. The Parti Ouvrier got 3.6 percent of the votes cast and thirteen seats.<sup>29</sup> Both Jaurès and Guesde himself were defeated, and the leadership of the socialist group in the Chamber fell to Millerand.

Guesde felt especially thwarted. His adversary, Eugène Motte, an important textile manufacturer in Roubaix, printed 400,000 flyers impugning Guesde's patriotism and holding him responsible for the economic crisis affecting the region. Moreover, he put pressure on his workers and had urged prospective buyers to boycott Roubaix mills while Guesde represented the district.<sup>30</sup> When a parliamentary investigating committee allowed the results to stand, Guesde appeared crushed. After a life of persecution and propaganda, exhaustion, sickness, and impatience anticipating the final revolutionary crisis, he and some colleagues had been carried to public office on a wave of universal suffrage. Encouraged, he then saw victory as winnable through parliamentary means. The 1898 election ended hopes of securing an early socialist majority, and more devastatingly, voters had rejected him, while the new socialist leaders were bourgeois arrivistes. Guesde was already emotionally drained by family problems and his own precarious health. A *Sûreté* report dated June 18, 1897, described his youngest son as "incurably ill." Another stated that the cause was addiction to morphine and that Guesde too was accustomed to taking the drug. A Paris *Préfecture* report dated May 11, 1897, agreed. A letter from Guesde to Liebknecht described the writer in such poor health as to be ordered to avoid "all mental activity" and to rest completely for six months.<sup>31</sup>

According to Willard, his wife was ill and died of cancer in 1900. Three years earlier his son had attempted suicide. Guesde himself suffered from pulmonary congestion, nervous exhaustion, prostate trouble, and diabetes. In February 1899, doctors feared for his life. Another *Sûreté* report described him as "absolutely heartbroken" over his "feeling of rejection" and his belief that there was a movement "to force him from the party."<sup>32</sup> Finally, he had lost Roubaix, "*la ville sainte de socialisme*." Clearly, not all workers there and throughout the Nord supported socialism: the victories a half-dozen years before had not, after all, been the work of great majorities, and nationalism and anticlass feelings still ran strong.<sup>33</sup> The loss of revolutionary fervor and the reformism of the 1890s had issued from the municipal and national electoral victories of 1892 and 1893. The be-

lief that successes won by recourse to moderate means must necessarily continue made disillusion all the greater when they did not. A renewed revolutionary response was to be expected.

When in late December 1894 Alfred Dreyfus was convicted by a closed court-martial of having sold military information to Germany, there was universal resentment against the traitor. Jaurès had wanted him shot, implying that only his wealth had saved the officer. Three years later, after Emile Zola wrote his open letter to the president of the Republic accusing the army of “an abominable campaign to mislead opinion” and in spite of attempts by nearly all politicians to avoid it, the case became an issue of primary political importance.

Marxists once more wished to “remain aloof” from “bourgeois struggles.” Guesde had made it clear that “the people do not have the right to bestow their pity.”<sup>34</sup> Independent socialists such as Millerand also took a neutral position, though less out of doctrinal conviction than a belief that taking a stand would be bad politics. Millerand may well have feared alienating patriotic voters, and not until the August 1898 confession and suicide of Colonel Henry, the army officer who had forged some of the incriminating evidence, did he show concern with the political and legal considerations. The young Emile Buré, a former activist in the Latin Quarter’s collectivist student group, now a journalist, recalled the time of the 1898 election. He and friends were waiting for returns in front of the offices of *La Petite République* and were cheering the Dreyfusards. An angry Deville, fearing a pro-Dreyfusard stand would produce socialist losses at the ballot box, admonished him: “So you want us beaten next Sunday.”<sup>35</sup>

The exception was now Jaurès. After his defeat in the 1898 election and as a result of an intensive study of the evidence made during that summer, he became convinced of Dreyfus’s innocence and was the first to oppose socialist neutrality. Jaurès now viewed the affair not as a simple struggle over the guilt of an army officer but as one between the progressive elements in the Republic and the organized forces of reaction.

Still, it was the neutralist stand that squared with the mainstream socialist practice of dissociating the movement from what were considered bourgeois struggles. Guesde and other socialist chiefs had rejected both Boulanger and his opportunist opposition. In January 1893, *La Revue socialiste* had urged socialists to stand aside from the Panama scandal. The policy statement issued by the Second International in 1891 constituted the orthodox position. An American Jewish group had asked about the socialist response to anti-Semitism, and the

resolution voted by the Brussels Congress clearly subordinated “antagonism or struggle of race and nationality” to “the class struggle between proletarians of all races and capitalists of all races.” It merely condemned anti-Semitic agitation as “one of the manoeuvres by which the capitalist class and reactionary governments try to make the socialist movement deviate and to divide the workers.”<sup>36</sup>

Alarmed by the anti-Dreyfusard reaction, and seeing it as a danger facing the Republic, some socialists began making renewed gestures toward socialist unity. After the May 1898 legislative election, Jaurès called for immediate structural unification of the diverse factions but had received only lukewarm support. Leaders such as Vaillant and Millerand voiced reservations: the separate factions had provided the force behind French socialism, and hasty fusion might lead to disorder; unity required a united will in favor of it. The loudest objections came from Guesde. A Paris Préfecture report quoted the opinion of Gabriel Farjat: the scheme was “a bauble of Jaurès,” and no socialist faction, save the “feeble Broussists,” supported it. Jaurès, had unfortunately said that “the old parties no longer can justify their existence,” and the remark visibly upset veterans in the movement.<sup>37</sup>

Offended that he was not consulted and distraught over his defeat, Guesde rejected proposals for unification. He resented Jaurès and what he called the latter’s obsession with Dreyfus. Dreyfus certainly experienced an unjust trial, but Guesde insisted the party remain neutral; he was not about to subordinate socialism to the campaign to reopen the case against a bourgeois army officer by his peers, and he railed against “newcomers giving lessons to old *militants*, to already tried and tested parties.”<sup>38</sup>

Two observers—and subsequent biographers of Jaurès—agreed that the hostility of the veterans was so great because Jaurès “tried to go over the heads of the old chiefs who wished to keep their identities.”<sup>39</sup> The police report cited above stated that Guesde, Allemane, and Vaillant all rejected unity “at any price,” fearing “the loss of their personal power, their abdication,” and “the pure sacrifice of twenty years of past efforts to organize their respective factions.” Convinced that unification attempts could only profit the “newcomers” to socialism, they hoped these efforts would prove futile. Most Guesdists also worried that the mounting solidarity for republican defense launched by the anti-Dreyfusard offensive would relegate social questions to second place at the very time when party leaders believed there was a need to return to the terrain of class conflict.<sup>40</sup>

The important voice in the POF leadership both opposing neutral-

ity and favoring unification was Lafargue's. He advised Guesde to join with Jaurès and take command of the socialist movement. Using arguments that recalled those used a decade ago when he pressed for socialist involvement in the Boulanger crisis—for the party to take advantage of widespread public hostility to existing republican practices—he now broke with the POF leadership to evoke support for the Republic. At a rally at the Maison du Peuple, Lafargue denounced anti-Semitism as “nothing less than a clerical manoeuvre . . . to strangle the Republic and return it to oppressive pre-1789 traditions.” He cited the history of clerical opposition to free thought. “It is not only the Jew but the Freemason, the free thinker, the Protestant one wants to bring down today.” Like Jaurès, who refused to distinguish between the Catholic and Jewish bourgeoisie, he condemned such leading anti-Semites as Drumont and Daniel Guérin, and even Christian Socialists, as all serving the cause of nationalist reaction. A new form of clerical reaction, on the defensive because of scientific gains, aimed at regaining dominion over workers. Proletarian socialism would not be taken in but would recognize capitalism as the real enemy.<sup>41</sup>

In newspaper articles published during these feverish days, Lafargue repeatedly denied that anti-Semitism was racial or religious; it was rather one of the forms taken by economic competition. Yet he could not free himself from some long-standing stereotypes: because of their “financial genius,” Jews were the leaders of the same capitalist society that their duplicity was destabilizing. Dreyfusards who courageously defended the army captain, “a son of the bourgeoisie,” should instead work to dismantle the instruments of military justice and complete the 1789 Revolution.<sup>42</sup>

Also aware of the stirrings toward socialist unification, Lafargue again asked Guesde not to let Jaurès seize the initiative. “There is no sense fighting the inevitable, and we should return to the movement with all our power . . . in order to direct the unified organization to our goals.” He advised Guesde to make the most of the “great theoretical victory” (that is, nominally Marxist) of Saint-Mandé in 1896 and join the unity movement.<sup>43</sup>

Guesde, however, remained inflexible. As in the Boulanger episode, he refused to take sides. And, as Joseph Reinach, a nonsocialist Dreyfusard and future historian of the affair, admitted, it was difficult for socialists who had fought bitterly against capitalist exploiters and were now asked to join them, to do so. Some revisionists were the same deputies and senators who had approved the *lois scélérates*.<sup>44</sup>

Looking back on the socialist response to the Dreyfus affair, Léon Blum believed that Guesde (and Vaillant) were convinced of Dreyfus's innocence and that their insistence on nonintervention was motivated by tactical reasons. They feared that Jaurès was so preoccupied with his battle to reopen the case, a task not necessarily the responsibility of socialists and seen by many of them as a diversion, that he had left the masses of workers behind. Yet Blum acknowledged that Jaurès's struggle on behalf of Dreyfus revitalized socialism with a new moral grandeur, and that Guesde's sectarianism cut the party off from those petit bourgeois and workers who had rallied to the Dreyfusard camp, thus leaving the POF's direction to intellectuals—who were sincere but without ties to workers.<sup>45</sup>

In a debate with Jaurès at the Lille Hippodrome, Guesde warned against “mobilizing and immobilizing the proletariat behind one faction of the bourgeoisie against another.” Dreyfus knew what he was doing when he joined the army, and was “above all a bourgeois.” And on July 24, there appeared a neutralist declaration in the name of the party's National Council that carried the signatures of Lafargue and Guesde, among others. The July Declaration identified politics as part of a “superstructure,” argued that socialists were not to get involved with the forms of government or with anticlericalism, and concluded with the words: “The proletariat has nothing to do with this battle which is not theirs . . .”<sup>46</sup>

Lafargue took exception to the POF proclamation, which he said exceeded what was authorized by the National Council and so was inexcusable. As a protest against “your Declaration, which is well beyond what you indicated,” he told Guesde, he could no longer write for *Le Socialiste*, certainly not for the time being. “The Workers' Party,” Lafargue insisted, “which is a political party, cannot disinterest itself from political questions that agitate the country, above all questions of militarism, courts-martial, bourgeois legality, patriotism, and anti-Semitism.” The party must lead the “floating masses” and not be towed in the wake of their apathy.<sup>47</sup> And as the Parti Ouvrier, in Lafargue's view, continued to isolate itself, his disagreement with Guesde intensified.

He followed his letter with a four-page memorandum, entitled “Notes on the Dreyfus Affair,” intended for Guesde and others on the party's executive committee. Lafargue made it clear he carried no brief for Dreyfus, who had “deliberately chosen his career.” But a lesson could be learned, that of the need to attack militarism as a product of

capitalism and specifically to reform the administration of military justice. By failing to make this clear, the Parti Ouvrier's manifesto was "badly understood and badly interpreted." Within weeks, Lafargue was publicly criticizing Guesde's neutralist stand, warning that only a few committed supporters would follow Guesde while the great majority would "march with Jaurès in the struggle against militarism."<sup>48</sup> Similarly, Lafargue rejected his party's policy with regard to socialist unity. He wanted the POF to pounce on the opportunity to cement cohesion among socialists with Marxist mortar, and at the end of August 1898 he pleaded with Guesde to have its leadership meet openly with Independents and Blanquists and have a committee formed at once to organize such a meeting.<sup>49</sup>

Writing to Kautsky the following year, Lafargue said flatly that "the conduct of our party in the Dreyfus affair was inexcusable and inexplicable," and that "personalities" were to blame. Dreyfus himself was not the issue, and socialists should have seized the opportunity to attack militarism and anti-Semitism. He (accurately) predicted that the victorious bourgeoisie would itself be obliged to deal with the problem of military justice.<sup>50</sup> The young Marx Dormoy—it had been Lafargue who suggested he be named after Marx—recalled a visit he and his sister made to the Lafargues in August 1898. Paul and Laura came to the Juvisy station to meet them, and Lafargue asked the young man why he was not a Dreyfusard. When Marx Dormoy said it was because of his father's influence, Lafargue the next day wrote to the elder Dormoy asking him to teach his son "something else."<sup>51</sup>

As ever, he was motivated chiefly by the wish to defend Marxist theory and expand Marxist influence. A year after Millerand's entry into the government, which Lafargue was to join with Guesde and other militants in denouncing, he was blaming "the crisis in which French socialism finds itself . . . [on] the absurd and incredible conduct of Guesde and Vaillant in the Dreyfus affair . . . thanks to which we are put in a difficult position to defend ourselves." Why, Lafargue asked? Because Jaurès and the Radicals come to us, seek seats, and "our inaction in the Dreyfus affair left the field to them," he answered. "Now our fears are realized. They increased their popularity. Now they want to destroy the organization permitting independence of the different groups. Today they want to change tactics; tomorrow it will be theory, like Bernstein & Company. I have, on several occasions, asked Guesde and our friends to intervene in the Dreyfus affair—to campaign against militarism, nationalism, clericalism. Jaurès would

have been obliged to modify [his stand] . . . I have not been listened to. At bottom it's a question of personalities . . . [This] tactic of crossed arms [is] suicidal." Deville was less circumspect: he bluntly attributed Guesde's behavior to jealousy of Jaurès.<sup>52</sup>

Thus in the summer of 1898 Lafargue withdrew from party activities in large measure because of his opposition to Guesde's response to the Dreyfus affair; which had been both to remain neutral and to reject any overtures for socialist unity. Did fear of seeing himself displaced by Jaurès as a leader of French socialism account for Guesde's behavior? Or was it the prospect of seeing twenty years' work destroyed? Or both? Lafargue showed no such fear and held no personal hostility toward Jaurès; he wanted the Parti Ouvrier to impose conditions on the socialist unity he saw as inevitable. Still, he refused to participate actively in preliminary unification talks because of his loyalty to Guesde and his belief in the need to maintain party discipline. Lafargue's absence from the POF's executive committee meetings was his way of voicing hostility to Guesde's position. For Lafargue, Jaurès's mounting popularity was more than a personality question; it was part of the growing threat to revolutionary socialism.<sup>53</sup> Lafargue's frustration mounted, and he revealed his unhappiness to a sympathetic Kautsky: "I share your opinion on the conduct taken by the Party in the Dreyfus affair. Several times I tried to get my view to prevail, but I failed. I remain silent because of [the need to maintain] discipline, but after the [Montluçon] Congress I will speak."<sup>54</sup> In fact, Lafargue would not be active again in party affairs until Millerand's entry into a nonsocialist government and the threat of doctrinal revision of Marx's views became real.

Pressured by the Parti Ouvrier federations that opposed the neutrality shown in the Dreyfus affair, forced to react to Colonel Henry's confession of forgery, and fearful of threatened government repression in the aftermath of a failed railroad strike, Guesde in late 1898 responded to Lafargue's pleas to take action. Delegates at the party's Montluçon Congress in late September softened the terms of the July Declaration: they condemned the excesses of militarism and called for an end to courts-martial while denouncing nationalism and anti-Semitism as deviations from the class struggle.<sup>55</sup> Guesde proposed the formation of a committee representing the various socialist factions to coordinate policy. Still, when the proposed "watch" committee turned into an action group intent on absorbing the various socialist factions with unity as the ultimate goal, Guesde and his followers, without



daring to risk a formal rejection, in Willard's words took on a "sulky" and "insolent" attitude and refused to participate in demonstrations, leaving the field open for Jaurès and the Independents. Guesde had seen that he could not "dominate" the committee, but continued to oppose as a diversion Jaurès's efforts to bring the socialist factions together. To protest Guesde's inaction, Lafargue still avoided party councils and refused to contribute to *Le Socialiste*.<sup>56</sup>

We saw that as party leaders Guesde and Lafargue had complemented each other, Lafargue contributing more to theory and Guesde to political direction. By virtue of his ties to Marx and Engels and his preference for maintaining his party's relations with foreign socialists—and so helping to give the POF an international outlook—Lafargue was better known abroad than Guesde. The two men had worked closely over the years. Still, their differences prevented the kind of cooperation that would have produced more efficient leadership. Deville recalled "ardent controversies between Guesde and Lafargue" on the party's National Council. Marx Dormoy remembered his father saying that he "still heard," and was "shocked" by, Guesde's "vehemence and truculence."<sup>57</sup> Yet although relations between the two men were far from intimate, indeed distant, Lafargue had always yielded first place to Guesde.

Not until Millerand's entry into a ministry in June 1899 did Lafargue once more participate in party councils. Thus when in the first week of January 1899 a telegram arrived announcing the imminent death of Paul's mother, now in her ninety-fourth year, and Lafargue left at once for Bordeaux, he was already missing executive committee deliberations. (She died soon after, having survived her husband by nearly thirty years.)<sup>58</sup> Although he then sided with Guesde in opposing the government, privately he continued to criticize Guesde for having abstained during the Dreyfus affair. Writing Kautsky as late as mid-September, Lafargue was still able to praise the legislative skills of Jaurès and Millerand: "If [they] were in the Chamber they would play an important role; they are both clever parliamentary tacticians."

An equally serious source of concern was Eduard Bernstein's efforts to revise Marxist theory. Lafargue was doubtless aware of the relationship between a revival of Kantian idealism and Bernstein's denial that an intensification of the class struggle was inevitable. In a newspaper article attack on Bernstein—and implicitly on Jaurès—Lafargue rejected as "ideological mystification" any appeal to abstract ideas. He wrote Kautsky in October 1898 to praise the latter's opposition to

revisionism but questioned his hostility to the moderation shown by British socialists. Rather than portraying the British movement as one characterized by the “diminution of revolutionary sentiment,” Kautsky needed to study that movement in its own right. By “revolution,” one must envision not gunshots and barricades—which are romantic and bourgeois forms of revolution—but the taking of political power, legally or illegally, to carry out socialist reform. Economic development in Great Britain, more than anywhere else, had prepared the way for such taking of political power. Thus there was a better chance in Britain for revolution—as Lafargue defined the term—and socialists in that country, unlike workers, were more, not less, revolutionary. Revealing the lasting imprint of Engels’s influence on him, Lafargue denied that Bernstein’s “transformation” was to be explained by his stay in England: it was, Lafargue said, rather due to “overwork and nerves,” an observation made at the time of Bernstein’s visit to Draveil.<sup>59</sup>

Engels, too, before his death, had commented on what he called Bernstein’s “nervous exhaustion.” Whatever the reasons, it was Lafargue’s linkage of revisionism and the threat to revolutionary socialism posed by Millerand’s entry into the cabinet—the one paving the way for the other and both furthered by the Marxists’ refusal to play a role in the Dreyfus affair—that prompted Lafargue to again play an active role in socialist politics.<sup>60</sup>

On June 26, 1899, after thirteen days without a government, almost a record even for the strife-ridden Third Republic, the Chamber of Deputies voted confidence in a new government. The man appointed premier, the conservative lawyer-politician René Waldeck-Rousseau, had made two most controversial appointments: the marquis de Galliffet, the general whose troops had crushed the Paris Commune almost thirty years before and who was anathema to the left; and Alexandre Millerand, the chief of the parliamentary socialists. The cabinet would be the first to contain a socialist, and Millerand would be the first socialist, with the exception of Louis Blanc, to sit in a European government. The deputies speculated that only the urgent need to discipline the army, distraught by Dreyfusard attacks on its integrity, and to ensure socialist support for the ministry could have prompted such a combination. But they could not contain their hostility to one or the other of the two men.<sup>61</sup>

In the interim, rumors had flown among socialists about the possible entry of Millerand into the cabinet being formed, but they aroused

no indignation. Independents, surprised and pleased, welcomed the reports. *Le Socialiste* did not discuss the likelihood; but since it had shown no anxiety over Waldeck-Rousseau's early intention to include Casimir-Périer in the government, we may assume it thought predominantly in terms of republican defense. The newspaper merely acknowledged that socialists were again called on to support the regime.<sup>62</sup>

When told of the inclusion of Galliffet, Lafargue was livid at the prospect. Aware that the general was still regarded with horror by the left, Jaurès hesitated but was persuaded by Lucien Herr, the socialist librarian of the Ecole Normale, who had previously helped to persuade him of Dreyfus's innocence. Herr now insisted that the matter of most pressing concern was republican victory. However, Vaillant, like Lafargue, withdrew his approval of Millerand's entry into the cabinet when he learned of Galliffet's inclusion. He had earlier shown no surprise, had made no difficulty of principle on grounds of the class struggle, and had only insisted that the party be freed of responsibility. It was, as Jaurès put it, the "very natural and legitimate emotion produced by the accession of Galliffet that determined Vaillant's reaction."<sup>63</sup>

The country was astounded at the news of the formation of the new government; some called it a "ministry of all talents," others, a "ministry of all contradictions." Jaurès and Independents applauded the act, justifying participation as recognizing the need for socialists to share in the defense of the beleaguered Republic. Brousse asserted that the safety of the country was primary and vindicated all measures of defense. Blanquists and Marxists appeared more ambivalent, and there was a divergence between the views of party leaders and those of the rank and file.<sup>64</sup> On the day that the Chamber reconvened, June 25, Parti Ouvrier deputies issued an ambiguous and contradictory declaration. They found themselves "unable to approve of a ministry headed by Waldeck-Rousseau, a man of big business and high finance, and including Galliffet, the butcher of republican and social Paris in 1871." Still, "to safeguard the Republic, the necessary instrument of social transformation, against militarist and clerical attack," they promised to support "energetic republican policies directed against conspiracies of seditious generals, Jesuits, and all reactionaries."<sup>65</sup> The POF deputies thus promised conditional support of the ministry. But Guesde, Lafargue, and the party leaders objected, and the deputies were directed to take a new line, to withdraw at once from the Socialist Union and form their own parliamentary group.<sup>66</sup>

When the new government presented itself the next day, a majority of Blanquists and Marxists thus abstained rather than join with reactionaries in opposition. The POF's executive council ordered its deputies either to vote against the Waldeck-Rousseau ministry or to abstain, but in no case to give it their support. Their abstention, together with the approval of ministerial socialists, provided the margin of difference and made possible acceptance of the cabinet by twenty-five votes. An era of schisms opened within French socialism, but with the return of Lafargue to join Guesde in combating Millerand and ministerialism, Parti Ouvrier ranks were again closed.

## 14 Party of Opposition

Two weeks after the approval of the Waldeck-Rousseau government, six Guesdist and Blanquist leaders, including Lafargue, Guesde, and Vaillant, met at Zévaès's home to draft a joint manifesto for their parties. Millerand's entry into the ministry had been denounced as "socialist defection" in the July 2 issue of *Le Socialiste*, and the POF leaders now invoked the declaration of principles previously lacking. The party's National Council had authorized the two chiefs to help draft a statement explaining the party's hostility to socialist participation in the government and its withdrawal from the parliamentary union. Lafargue agreed on the need for such an explanation but wanted it to acknowledge that workers were called on to defend the Republic against clerical and military interests. He also believed it was necessary to win time to let emotions cool.<sup>1</sup>

The manifesto took the form of an "appeal to working and socialist France" and made the point that "the Socialist Party, party of class, cannot be or become, without destroying itself, a government party." The signers broke with ministerial socialists in order to end "the so-called socialist policy previously followed . . . full of compromise and deviation" and to substitute for it a class-based revolutionary program. The contradiction between the two had clearly been demonstrated by the entry of a socialist into the government "hand in hand with the murderer of May . . . There cannot be an accord between those who have compromised the honor and interests of socialism and those in charge of defending them . . . We cannot be a ministerial party. Party of opposition we are and must remain."<sup>2</sup> Although not identifying him by name, the manifesto took aim at Jaurès when it said that "the socialist who in the Dreyfus affair only sees Dreyfus and not the suppression of military justice has been misled." According to Zévaès, the words were Guesde's, but Lafargue, although he continued to question the usefulness of personal attacks, had gone along.<sup>3</sup>

The reaction both to Millerand's entry and to the POF executive

committee's rejection of it was predictable. Jaurès, other independent socialists, and Possibilists—in contrast to Lafargue, Guesde, and Vaillant—applauded the act. In the June 24 issue of *La Petite République*, Jaurès had justified participation as recognizing the need for socialists to share in the defense of the besieged Republic. Now he said simply that it was wrong to reject socialist change by parliamentary means, as implied in the manifesto, and that participation was the logical outcome of the policy to win public power, a policy that had received widespread support in the 1893–1898 Chamber.<sup>4</sup> Writing in the same newspaper on August 7, Brousse said that the safety of the country was the supreme law and vindicated all measures of defense. Younger Independents like Albert Thomas and Joseph Paul-Boncour reasoned the time was ripe for a socialist in government, especially since it would bring advantages to workers, and Thomas dismissed opposition as motivated on grounds other than principle. He agreed with Léon Blum, who attributed the criticism to “a mixture of various doses of vanity, suspicion, and ambition, a failing inherent in the French psyche.”<sup>5</sup>

What startled the revolutionary leadership was the extent of the opposition within their own rank and file. Not only Guesdist and Blanquist deputies but party members in the various regional federations took exception to the content of the manifesto and its brutal manner of expression and to what they regarded as a personal attack on Jaurès. Local groups made their disappointment known. In Nantes, Brunellière said that his farmers approved Millerand's entry and that he was indignant at seeing his name used without his permission. In the Guesde archives, there are notebooks of clippings describing favorable and unfavorable responses to the manifesto, and the latter are three times as numerous. Even such Parti Ouvrier strongholds in the Nord as Caudry and Fourmies preferred moderate to revolutionary socialism, but party loyalty made them retain their membership in the Fédération.<sup>6</sup> In Marseilles, Guesdists believed that the entry benefited the party and blamed the schism on the leaders who “compromised the honor of socialism.” In Bordeaux, Lavigne assailed Guesde for “unleashing a war against Jaurès and Millerand.” Deville supported Millerand's entry, and the breach between him and his former colleagues widened. Lafargue's letters to Deville, sparse after 1896, ceased after 1901.<sup>7</sup>

Surprised at Lavigne's criticisms (they had both opposed Guesde's neutrality at the time of the Boulanger crisis), Lafargue remonstrated

with Guesde: "You told me that party members in Bordeaux were only office seekers."<sup>8</sup> When, in three editorials in *La Petite République* in mid-July 1899, Jaurès complained that the manifesto had targeted him, Lafargue replied at once and sent a copy of his letter to Guesde. He denied that the offending passage was ever intended to apply to Jaurès personally. "How can you believe that we, whose admiration and sympathy for your integrity and character you must know, include you in the category of those who deceive the proletariat?" Still, he admitted, "we could not fully approve your excessively personal campaign for Dreyfus . . . The socialist who in the Dreyfus Affair sees only Dreyfus and not the suppression of military justice has been swindled." And he later told Guesde there never would have been such a strong reaction had the signers of the manifesto not implicitly indicted Jaurès.<sup>9</sup>

Jaurès published Lafargue's letter and openly thanked him for it, although he wondered whether Lafargue spoke for the other signers as well. He asked whether Lafargue supposed that any socialist had circumscribed the Dreyfus affair to the question of a single individual. He added that while the affair's "brutal impact" would endure, the division within socialism caused by it could be "overcome by reconciliation." To achieve it he called for a general socialist congress.<sup>10</sup>

The reasons for the hostility shown by the antiministerialist party leaders issued from doctrinal considerations. However, both the Paris Préfecture and Sûreté agreed with Thomas and Blum that other motives counted as well. A communiqué to the Sûreté noted that the formation of the government provided the excuse sought by militant leaders to restore their own diminishing power within the movement, and specifically to limit the influence of Jaurès, seen as "a serious rival." Guesde was subjected to a particularly bitter attack on these grounds by Charles Peguy, a staunch Dreyfusard and spokesman for students sympathetic to socialism at the Ecole Normale.<sup>11</sup>

Two anti-Guesdist articles in a centrist newspaper, *Le Petit Bleu*, published on July 24 and 27, criticized the Marxist chief at length. It traced the history of his reformism to 1891, when universal suffrage freed Lafargue, and to Guesde's own electoral victory in 1893, as a result of which Roubaix became a "holy city" and French Marxism entered its parliamentary phase. During the Dreyfus affair, Guesde and Vaillant slipped to "second rank" within the movement. Guesde had particularly felt his authority ebbing when he traveled incognito to the German Social Democratic Party's Stuttgart Congress and real-

ized that he was no longer considered the spokesman for French socialism. He longed to regain status, and the inclusion of Millerand in a bourgeois cabinet together with Galliffet provided “a wonderful opportunity.”

The POF leadership stood fast before this outpouring of discontent. Guesde went to the Nord and to the center of the country. For the sake of party unity and in spite of his misgivings over the personal attacks it contained, Lafargue began to buttress the manifesto with doctrinal considerations equating the invitation to Millerand with the bourgeois tactics of 1848, which, he said, successfully “quieted” Louis Blanc and “domesticated” the movement. Both experiences pointed out the need for socialists to unite on clearly defined theoretical bases. But Lafargue privately told Guesde that all groups within the POF had the right to criticize its executive committee, and that these groups might well constitute a majority in the party.<sup>12</sup>

During the half-dozen years beginning in 1899, the Parti Ouvrier leadership made efforts to turn French socialism in a revolutionary direction. Because of the Dreyfus affair, ministerial participation, and revisionism—and regardless of his personal unhappiness with Guesde’s tactics—Lafargue joined the party executive in recognizing the need to reassert revolution and condemn bourgeois liberalism, particularly if socialists were to come together in a single party. In such an event, the necessity of doctrinal and political renewal was absolute, and that, in turn, meant a reversion to revolutionary sources and a recommitment to the pursuit of a class policy. The two leaders won Blanquist support, but in the eyes of workers and the socialist rank and file, they appeared as increasingly sectarian partisans of an “all or nothing” program.<sup>13</sup>

Notwithstanding their mutual opposition to ministerialism, Guesde’s motives were as much personal as doctrinal, based as they were on a perceived loss of prestige and status, while Lafargue’s were more doctrinal than personal. Although they were once again allied, ties between the two men showed no signs of improvement; however, concern with maintaining party discipline prevented them from making public their still outstanding differences. Lafargue not only opposed Guesde’s propensity to personalize doctrinal and strategic differences with more moderate socialists—he reproached him for being “maladroit” and unable “to work frankly with other comrades”—but wanted him to stop begging for German money to keep *Le Socialiste* alive.<sup>14</sup>



Once more contributing to *Le Socialiste*, Lafargue asked that the newspaper reach out to Independents, and specifically urged Guesde to reply to Jaurès. In their descriptions of POF attacks on ministerial socialists, the police reports previously cited show few references to Lafargue, whose chief concern lay in maintaining a Marxist presence in any attempt to bring the various socialist factions together. He feared that unless the Parti Ouvrier set the agenda, Jaurès would bring up the Dreyfus issue in an all-socialist congress in order to confront the POF with abstaining at a time the Republic needed defense. "On this ground, we would most certainly be beaten," he told Guesde, and added that the latter was driving him to a position "where I will be forced to withdraw from the movement or protest against your conduct in these circumstances."<sup>15</sup>

Subsequent letters to Guesde throughout the summer of 1899 show Lafargue wanting to take advantage of Millerand's entry to widen the split between ministerialists and antiministerialists, that is, to elevate the issue of socialist participation in a bourgeois government to the level of theory and so force Jaurès to redefine his view of socialism. Lafargue now said the vagueness (which could accommodate Marxist principles) of the Saint-Mandé program had permitted this "bourgeois interpretation" of socialism. In any case, the program, thanks to Millerand, was no longer relevant, and the time had come to repudiate it.<sup>16</sup> To reveal the extent to which Jaurès was prepared to cooperate with the enemies of socialism would grant revolutionaries a victory on theoretical grounds and let them regain the initiative they had lost to independent socialists. The divisions between Guesdists and Independents became all the more clear when, in an open letter to Lafargue, Jaurès insisted precisely on keeping the three Saint-Mandé principles as bases for the forthcoming all-socialist congress.<sup>17</sup>

Even so, convinced of the need for socialist unity, provided that Marxist theory would not be abandoned, Lafargue asked Guesde "not to resist the inevitable but to join it [and] work to direct the unified forces toward our objectives." For over a year he had been asking his colleague to meet openly with other socialists. By distinguishing reformists from revolutionaries, the decision to participate in a nonsocialist government, he predicted, would ultimately be discredited, leaving the socialist leadership in the hands of the revolutionaries.<sup>18</sup>

In *Le Socialisme et le conquête des pouvoirs publics*, a thirty-two-page pamphlet published after the cabinet won parliamentary approval, Lafargue explained his condemnation of Millerand's decision

in the name of the class struggle. While acknowledging that Millerand's entry constituted official recognition of the power of the socialist movement—which he took pride in—he argued that “a socialist in a bourgeois ministry is a socialist lost to socialism.”<sup>19</sup>

Lafargue admitted that he had based his earlier optimism on socialist successes at the polls and the anticipation of further successes. He had initially welcomed the popularity of Millerand and Jaurès, in the belief that they would spread collectivist ideas while shunning any wish to play a leadership role. But the twin broadsides of ministerialism and revisionism forced socialists to reconsider party tactics. The invitation to Millerand showed appreciation of the socialist capacity to provide competent ministers and run a complex society. It could also be seen as part of the bourgeois effort to defuse socialism by eliminating its revolutionary option and by holding out the illusion of shared power and the promise of respectability.<sup>20</sup>

A socialist in parliament strengthened the movement by showing workers how useful the party could be. Reforms spurred recruitment and raised class consciousness. Socialist deputies could struggle to suppress war. The elections they fought served propaganda purposes. The fear of socialist competition forced nonsocialist incumbents to work for reform. Hence “parliament was an admirable battlefield for the socialist party,” which, whether it won or lost elections, emerged from campaigns richer in personnel and organizational strength. But despite their electioneering, socialists did not aim at becoming a major parliamentary force. Parliamentary government was only a capitalist device to perpetuate capitalism, and only “the force of circumstances” explained the parliamentary involvement of socialists in the past few years. “Parliamentarianism is the specific governmental form of the capitalist class . . . and liberalism is the shield covering this brutal domination.” Independent socialists, cool to orthodox Marxism, failed to realize this, and by focusing on immediate gains, as had the Fabians in England, they opened the party to Radical manipulation.<sup>21</sup> Unlike a socialist in parliament, a socialist in the government—whose entry resulted from a concession and whose affiliation would dampen enthusiasm—limited chances for reform because to keep his portfolio he must make concessions to his adversaries.

Moreover, Independents who argued that governmental participation was a logical consequence of parliamentary participation were wrong. A legislative election was the legal component of class war: a socialist entered parliament with a program to continue the fight

against capitalism. But a government was formed only after an understanding among its future members, and a single socialist could introduce only those reforms least offensive to the capitalist order and so was committed to maintain capitalist exploitation. Lafargue distinguished Millerand, “an *arriviste*,” from Jaurès, whose conversion had shown that intellectuals were being won over to socialism. The inadequacy of the Saint-Mandé principles was clear: international accord had become simple cordiality; socialization of the means of production, state purchases; and the conquest of political power, a socialist minister in a bourgeois government. (In an article published July 30 in *Le Socialiste*, Lafargue disingenuously said that at the time he had considered Millerand’s 1896 speech vague but that he had avoided criticism for the sake of socialist unity.)

Thus Lafargue was convinced that a major new departure in strategy had been introduced. His hostility to ministerial participation, indeed, his view of the state, derived from his reading of Marx and Engels: the former’s critique of the German party’s Gotha Program and the latter’s *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, which asserted that “the modern state, no matter what its form, is essentially a capitalist machine . . . an organization of the particular class, which was *pro tempore* the exploiting class.” Engels had criticized parliamentary government as “teaching respect for tradition,” and the extension of the franchise in Britain as comparable to the use made of religion “to keep people in order by moral means.” Hence Lafargue’s comment on the formal character of liberty: “the only liberty that wage earners will ever know will be that to die of hunger.”<sup>22</sup>

In a debate with Guesde in Lille in mid-November 1900, Jaurès reminded his audience that Lafargue, although opposed to Millerand’s entry, nevertheless saw it as a decisive symptom of the growing power of socialism. In response, Guesde also cited Lafargue, as warning how class struggle was in danger of becoming class cooperation.<sup>23</sup>

Lafargue summed up the crisis—and expressed his frustration—in a lengthy letter to Liebknecht in late July: “The crisis in French socialism could be fatal,” he wrote. “Thanks to the absurd and inconceivable conduct of Guesde and Vaillant, we are in a position that is difficult for me to defend. Since socialism became an electoral force, it has been invaded by the followers of Jaurès and Millerand . . . The Dreyfus Affair and our inactivity gave them an enormous popularity. They rule the party alone, destroy organizations and establish independent groups . . . of neo-socialist bourgeois. Today they want to change tac-

tics; tomorrow it will be theory, to manage socialism according to [the ideas of] Bernstein & Co. . . . But I will not despair. I hope to get out of the crisis by dividing into two camps ministerialists . . . and revolutionary socialists. We will regain our influence and prestige. But we must never again follow this tactic of inaction as did Guesde in the Dreyfus Affair.” In a postscript, Lafargue criticized Liebknecht’s support in *Vorwärts* of Guesde’s stand: “How people can attack militarism and fail to take advantage of this business . . . [is] inconceivable.”<sup>24</sup>

On September 1, Lafargue was still complaining to Liebknecht—and to Kautsky—about how much better off his party would be “if we had not let Jaurès [seen by Lafargue as the force behind independent socialism] and the Independents [seen by the public as comprising the leadership of the socialist movement] capture public sentiment.” Two months later he again pointed to the danger of a POF loss of influence: “We know if Jaurès and the Independents win, the workers’ movement in France would be compromised for some years.”<sup>25</sup>

Millerand’s participation in the ministry showed the need for socialists to unite on clearly defined theoretical bases. Jaurès had suggested the holding of a general congress of socialist groups to decide definitively on the question of ministerial participation. The idea took hold, and all planned to attend a proposed meeting in December. Guesdist and Blanquist chieftains included themselves as well, for refusal might appear to the rank and file as added proof that their leaders were indifferent or hostile to the common desire for socialist unity.<sup>26</sup>

By way of preparation, the POF in August debated the issue at its own Epernay Congress. In four days of secret sessions—from which even the SPD’s *Vorwärts* reporter was barred—the idea of participation found “many defenders.”<sup>27</sup> At the last minute, Lafargue told Guesde that he would be unable to attend because Laura was recovering from “an accident.” Had he anticipated the delegates’ widespread unhappiness with the executive committee’s antiministerialism? He admitted that party members had every right to examine and criticize the acts of their leaders, but not to go public with their criticisms. And Lafargue predicted the delegates to the all-socialist congress would support a ministry that promised to carry out reforms and take energetic steps against clerico-military reaction. Other socialist organizations would do likewise, “because all they want are ministerial portfolios.”<sup>28</sup>

To his German correspondents, Lafargue further predicted that

delegates to such a congress might criticize Millerand for accepting a post without party support, but, anticipating reforms, they would simply state that he served on his own responsibility. The split in French socialism, he reminded his correspondents, issued from the arrival on the scene of socialists independent in name only who sought to impose their will on the rest and satisfy their ambitions. But precisely because the movement had been invaded by *arrivistes*, who saw socialism as the shortest route to power, the question of ministerialism had to be openly confronted.<sup>29</sup>

The Parti Ouvrier gathering went as expected. After a motion from the floor asked that the executive committee be censured for affiliating the party with its manifesto, Guesde gave up his attempt to secure unqualified support of his antiministerialist stand. Still, he refused to face the theoretical issues Lafargue had wanted to raise, and he tried to placate hostile federations that disapproved of his strong opposition to Millerand's entry. The resulting resolution approved of the executive committee's rejection of a socialist in government but refused to make it a permanent policy. In view of the clearly hostile manifesto of July 14, this resolution must be taken as the strongest indication of the differences separating a majority of the rank and file from the leadership.<sup>30</sup>

In numerous articles, Lafargue insisted ever more loudly on the need to reach preliminary agreement on the nature of socialism. He forcefully branded Independents as initiators of a new tactic. Millerand's entry symbolized socialist strength but should not be raised to a new form of political action. Cooperation with the bourgeoisie, motivated by the wish to defend the Republic, would "chloroform" socialists with short-term results. More could be gained by opposition than by participation. By furnishing occasional ministers, socialism would contract "parliamentary gangrene." It must remain an irreducible party of opposition. He again urged Guesde to take the strongest possible line on ministerialism and to make public the resolutions the POF planned to propose at the forthcoming General Congress: he wanted them published in *Le Socialiste* and was disappointed by Guesde's failure to do so. "I am sorry you did not follow my plan," he told Guesde the week before the congress convened; "Jaurès is doing so in *La Petite République* . . . Jaurès and the ministerialists fear resolutions above all else." Lafargue, then, wanted the Parti Ouvrier to go on the offensive. Aware of rumors about disagreements between him-

self and Guesde, he suggested the two arrive together at sessions in a show of unity.<sup>31</sup>

Placed high on the agenda of the all-socialist congress were the questions of ministerial participation and party unity. On the evening of December 2, the day before the scheduled opening of the congress, the Guesdists held a reception to welcome their delegates from outside Paris and to decide on common tactics. According to a Préfecture report, it was also an attempt to impose discipline. The Guesdists arrived at a common stand, but only after “stormy scenes.” The rank and file had made it known that they viewed the reestablishment of socialist unity as primary, that they had tired of incessant factional disputes, and that they believed the Millerand case could be rationally and amicably resolved. Some delegates resented the pressure to reach “agreement.” Still, a majority acknowledged the need for discipline.<sup>32</sup>

The First General Congress of French Socialist Organizations convened on December 3 in the Japy gymnasium to discuss both the Millerand case and party unity. No fewer than 670 delegates took the chill off the poorly heated hall. With its 530 mandates (of a total of 1,452), the Parti Ouvrier fielded the largest delegation. For two days, speaker followed speaker, one approving of Millerand’s entry, another rejecting it.<sup>33</sup> For Daniel Halévy, who observed the proceedings, it was the followers of Jaurès versus the sectarians, especially “the old Lafargue, Marx’s son-in-law, [who] furiously leads them to assail the tribune”; but the hard-liners were unable to stop Jaurès, who dominated them by his “thunderous words” and who compared them with “men of the fifth and sixth centuries” in the church struggles of the era. The hall was clearly divided: the left side shouted “Galliffet, Galliffet,” the right, “Bordeaux, Bordeaux,” a reference to the ten-year-old electoral coalition of Guesdists and Boulangists in that city. When an Allemanist speaker cried “à bas Liebknecht,” Lafargue rushed to the tribune with fist clenched, and force was required to prevent a struggle. Ministerialists such as Jaurès and Briand described socialist participation in national government as the natural consequence of socialist participation in parliament and in municipal government, and said that responsibility in the latter was not essentially different from that of a socialist minister. Because socialists could never determine exactly when collectivist society would fully replace capitalism, they must continue to work for reforms in order to prepare for that day, and with what better instrument than a socialist minister. And given the near-unanim-

ity of socialist opinion in the 1890s on the usefulness of reforms, Marxists had contributed to the arrival of socialists in office.<sup>34</sup>

Antiministerialists stressed the nature of the class struggle and the necessity of distinguishing a tactic from a principle. Was the party to remain revolutionary or become semibourgeois? A socialist minister by the very nature of his position was forced to cooperate with the government in power, and the government represented bourgeois interests. Workers would lose confidence in socialism when the ministry containing a socialist ordered troops to the scene of a strike. Socialist participation in the governments of other countries, and the support conceivably given to those governments' war policies, would bring an end to internationalism. The analogy between socialist deputies and socialist ministers was rejected. The election of socialist deputies was permissible, because it reflected the will of the people; but the appointment of a socialist minister reflected only the decision of a premier-designate seeking a wider basis of support.

Lafargue spoke on December 4. His anger, and that of the revolutionaries, had mounted as the government in the first weeks of its tenure took action similar to that taken by previous governments. The cabinet, Millerand included, had approved Waldeck-Rousseau's decision to postpone the immediate suppression of the religious budget. Soon strikers would be shot at the scene of a strike. On hearing of Millerand's proposed industrial conciliation bill, Laura sarcastically noted, "*we are all socialists now; he has just said publicly he wants to see bosses and workers get together*"<sup>35</sup> [emphasis in original].

In his speech, Lafargue acknowledged that Millerand's entry testified to the growing strength of socialism, "a token of our next triumph," and denied that his opposition issued from a conflict of personalities. But his reference to ministerialism as "a new tactic proposed by new recruits" drew protests from the audience. Lafargue censured the new government for keeping an embassy in the Vatican; and when he denounced the anticlericalism called for by Jaurès and Independents as a diversion and as an "old Radical dodge," the crowd, screaming, came to its feet. Parti Ouvrier delegates, in turn, climbed on their chairs: "If Lafargue can't speak, no one will speak." When a semblance of order was reached, Lafargue in a more conciliatory tone praised Jaurès's talent and asked why he had befriended Millerand. When the latter's entry into the government was presented not as an exceptional act but as the point of departure for a new method of action, socialists had no choice but to oppose it. He described the

danger in moving socialism from its “true battlefield” and associating its representatives with the “faults” and “crimes” committed by bourgeois governments. Rather than a socialist victory, ministerial participation was “a bourgeois trick”; as in 1848, the middle class had sought to neutralize socialist forces.<sup>36</sup>

Despite his disclaimers, Lafargue was veering toward the personal criticism of Jaurès for which he had criticized Guesde. While he may have admired Jaurès personally, he doubtless shared Laura’s opinion that “there is a piece of Bernstein in the brilliant Jaurès—all fire and flame.” More critical than her husband, she recognized Jaurès’s oratorical prowess but refused to believe that his political convictions were “fixed from on high.”<sup>37</sup> Certainly Lafargue was sincere in believing that Jaurès’s approval of Millerand’s entry and the reformism that gave rise to it played into the hands of the bourgeoisie. He was to repeat this theme in *Le Socialiste* and in a new daily, *Le Petit Sou*, an antigovernment newspaper owned by Waldeck-Rousseau’s millionaire brother-in-law and opened to the Parti Ouvrier in September 1900. Lafargue wrote an antigovernment article nearly every week for a year and a half. Ignoring the Saint-Mandé Program’s stated objective of abolishing capitalism, he was dismissing the program by year’s end as “Radical ideas clad in socialist phraseology.”<sup>38</sup> He shared the hostility of the Marxist and Blanquist leadership at seeing Jaurès and the independent socialist initiative succeed in bringing about a renewed effort at party unity; he particularly shared the veterans’ anger at Jaurès’s earlier suggestion that “the old parties no longer had a role to play.” Lafargue had sarcastically told the General Congress, “We, the old *militants*, are crotchety, irrational, and incapable of understanding the new, enlarged, and embellished integral socialism.” Newcomers, he had charged, came to the party because of its strength; they had done nothing to organize it; they wanted only to exploit it. At that, another outcry went up: “It is not only Guesdists who are socialists,” one voice was heard to exclaim.<sup>39</sup>

When ministerial socialists accused “the old *militants*” of having constantly imposed their views and reminded them of the need to secure the recruits turned aside by their intransigence, a furious Lafargue exploded: “You did not come [to socialism] when there were only a hundred of us.” To the acclaim of the Marxist and Blanquist delegates, he added that “the dangers [of Millerandism] are enormous. Not only is a socialist minister like Millerand obliged to share the responsibility of all the faults, all the crimes, that the bourgeois gov-



ernment commits, but he authorizes them by his presence.” Another uproar followed Lafargue’s description of “the new tactic” as nothing more than “the old feudalism.” In a reply, Briand reminded Lafargue that “if we are sliding down the slope, you helped lubricate it.”<sup>40</sup>

The resolution finally approved by the all-socialist congress matched that of Epernay in terms of ambiguity. It neither approved nor repudiated ministerial participation, stating only that when “exceptional circumstances arose, the question would be fully examined.” Socialists, meanwhile, were to work for both revolution and election to office. However, before voting this text, delegates, in an attempt to prevent a possible departure by Guesdists and Blanquists, first accepted (by a closer vote) an amendment proposed by Guesde. The amendment stated that the class struggle prohibited the entry of a socialist into a bourgeois cabinet, and formally put the congress on record as opposed to the principle of participation. For most socialists, the Millerand case was seen as accidental, and few expected an early recurrence. Primary consideration was given to party unity.

The thorny choice lay between federation and fusion of the various factions. Guesde contended that total unity would mean total conflict, and it was decided to form the newly established party, the Parti Socialiste Français, as a federation of the various factions, with each retaining its identity and naming its own candidates on the first ballot of any future election. Following SPD and POF organizational procedure, the directing voice was to be an annual congress; in the interim, an executive committee, staffed by delegates from the various organizations and proportional to their strength, was to manage affairs. The party and its committee would control socialist deputies and the socialist press.<sup>41</sup>

The groundswell for unity carried everything before it, subordinating differences of opinion about ministerial participation to the realization that an alliance had been sealed, that there were no longer Guesdists, Blanquists, or Allemanists, but only socialists. As the strife of the past five days was drowned out by the lively “Carmagnole,” and then the more solemn “Internationale,” everyone present, from aged Communards to the newest recruit, was affected.

However, as the perceptive moderate socialist François de Pressense wrote in *L'Aurore* on December 17, the fundamental dilemma of democratic socialism had not been resolved. “Once in an election,” he said, “one had to be a reformer, if not a reformist.” On the other hand, he was quick to point out, if socialism became another, albeit

more progressive, version of the Radical party, it lost its *raison d'être*. Whether their ferocious antiministerialism was an effort by Lafargue and the other veterans to prevent the jettisoning of the party's revolutionary equipage; whether it was their natural disillusion with reformism after the disappointing results of the 1898 election; whether it was an identity crisis they were experiencing; or whether it was a combination of all these things can never be determined with accuracy. What remains clear is their turn to the left and their determination to use the executive committee of the newly formed party to pattern socialist tactics on those followed before 1892–1893.

Although ministerialism was denounced in principle and although the executive committee (created later in the month) of the new federated socialist party contained fifteen Parti Ouvrier members and seven Blanquists (of forty-three members), including Guesde, Lafargue, and Vaillant, the POF's conviction that it had won at Japy was misguided. Lafargue's tactics were partially successful; however, basic theoretical questions were not answered, and a majority of the Guesdist delegation, largely coming from outside of Paris, had broken with the *doctrinairisme* they accused their leaders of displaying and had sided with Independents. Lafargue could only hope to control the basis of the fragile unity reached.<sup>42</sup>

In the months that followed, the old Parti Ouvrier chiefs would become increasingly isolated, and their isolation was reflected in the decline of the party vote. The POF had won 293,000 votes in the 1898 legislative election; by 1902 it collected only 186,000, fully one-third fewer votes. Moreover, its remaining strength became increasingly concentrated: only in four departments did Guesdists in the 1902 election win over five percent of the registered voters.<sup>43</sup> It was becoming an isolated sect, suffering from what its historians called "sclerosis," which seemed to bear out Lafargue's warning that "a socialist party that doesn't act commits suicide."

## 15 Socialism and the Intellectuals

On June 21, 1900, at Chalon-sur-Saône, three workers were shot to death by police at the scene of a strike. Afterward, strikers in Martinique were similarly assaulted. These tragedies seemed to bear out the warnings of Lafargue and other antiministerialists, and the Parti Ouvrier planned to get as much propaganda value as possible from them. For example, it proposed that a monument to the Chalon dead be erected with the inscription “victims of a ministry containing a socialist.”<sup>1</sup> The antiministerialist opposition successfully thwarted Millerand’s attempts to strengthen trade unions by endowing them with a legal identity and hence the right to undertake profit-making activities. There was enormous opposition not only from ownership, but from workers, socialists (including the same Marxists and Blanquists who a few years earlier had supported similar proposals), and syndicalists. The latter feared that the extension of union powers would destroy the class consciousness of workers, would immobilize the unions by squandering their resources, and would shift the initiative from militant minorities to majorities concerned only with increasing and preserving their union’s wealth. Millerand’s bills to apply new and compulsory arbitration machinery and to provide workers with old-age benefits met with similar receptions. The executive committee of the federated Parti Socialiste Français voted to reject his bill on compulsory arbitration as “contrary to union organization and to the objectives and interests of workers.” Rejecting this bill as well as the proposal to have workers contribute to proposed social insurance funds held by the state, the POE, at its own 1901 congress, condemned these proposals as “vast swindles.”<sup>2</sup>

Throughout 1900, reports coming to the Sûreté described how “the still irreducible adversaries of the ministry” persisted in having Millerand ousted from the party. They were seen “as working to create a hostile current” and as “complaining bitterly” about a proposed hours reduction law. “Never . . . have there been so many outbursts by

the Guesdists and Blanquists against a ministry.” One agent, on learning of a plot to embarrass Millerand by having a wreath placed at the *mur des fédérés* (the wall in the Père Lachaise cemetery where the last Communard prisoners were executed) bearing the inscription “to the victims of Galliffet,” commented that Guesdists resembled reactionaries in their opposition to the government.<sup>3</sup> In late March, at a lecture sponsored by a collectivist student group, Lafargue again criticized Jaures’s support of Millerand. He regretted that socialists were “putting aside” questions of social emancipation in favor of religious issues, because “bourgeois exploiters and capitalists were much more dangerous for workers.”<sup>4</sup> At the same time, the attempts of Eduard Bernstein and others to revise Marxist theory infuriated Lafargue. In numerous articles throughout 1900, he condemned as reactionary all efforts to synthesize Marxist materialism and Kantian idealism—whose revival accompanied and in part inspired revisionism and which he called the “philosophy of opportunism.”<sup>5</sup>

Personal as well as ideological differences contributed to Lafargue’s break with Bernstein. Both Lafargues felt mounting resentment over Bernstein’s implementation of the decision allowing him to edit Marx’s and Engels’s papers, especially as Bernstein’s criticisms of the two founders’ teachings became more apparent. Laura was determined to publish her father’s papers herself and not allow “the Germans” to do it. To Kautsky she cited Engels’s 1894 letter stating that Marx’s manuscripts would revert to her. She advertised in *Vorwärts* for copies of her father’s letters, signing her name “Marx-Lafargue.” She could not understand why Bernstein should be irritated by her objections. What a “singular person” he is, she confided in Kautsky. “After writing books and no end of articles against the Marxist theories, he is beside himself with anger because the heirs of Marx refuse to entrust him with the editorship of the manuscripts left by Marx.”<sup>6</sup>

Indignant at what he regarded as an unwarranted intrusion into philosophy and having at last lost patience, Jaurès called Lafargue “a poor vendor of pseudo-Marxism.” Charles Rappoport, at that time a Kantian, asked the readers of *La Revue socialiste* (in June 1900) to condemn the “Marxist” Lafargue, who takes pleasure “in treating general ideas, which even science cannot acknowledge, as metaphysical derricks.” Lenin, on the other hand, cited Lafargue’s articles at length in his *Materialism and Empiro-Criticism* and praised them for having provided a much needed criticism of Kant from the left.<sup>7</sup>

The Parti Ouvrier took the offensive in its stronghold in the Nord

Department: the Fédération's Caudry Congress on August 5, 1900, voted a resolution correctly interpreted as a veritable declaration of war: "Never have the workers been so deceived, condemned, cut down, shot, and massacred . . . Never has war against the working class been waged as relentlessly as under the Waldeck-Rousseau-Miller and ministry." A month later the POF's Paris-based organization resolved "to discard from the Parti Socialiste Français the non-revolutionary elements who cooperate and compromise with the bourgeoisie." Its proposal to base a united party on clearly stated revolutionary principles was adopted at the POF's Ivry Congress in September.<sup>8</sup>

The opposition of Marxists and Blanquists remained bitter and uncompromising. If strengthened by feelings of resentment and fear over their loss of status within French socialism, each criticism contained a core of legitimate complaint. Millerand's ten-hour act temporarily raised the number of working hours for children; the retirement benefits plan he proposed was incompatible with the firing on workers at Chalon (Lafargue called it "the pension of the dead"); and compulsory arbitration required workers to rely on the good offices of the government. Social legislation worked to reduce the class consciousness of the proletariat. And French workers, regardless of their political enfranchisement, were denied basic economic rights until after World War II. Employers either refused to recognize trade unions or sought their destruction, thus rendering them unstable and instilling within them the need to preserve militancy in order to survive. In this context, it can be argued that revolutionary socialists were correct to reject Millerand's efforts to integrate French workers into society without first wringing fundamental concessions from the government. In any event, the Marxists' abandonment of reformism starting in the early 1890s marked a departure from the emphasis previously placed on social legislation. Together with Blanquists, they created an image of sectarianism and began to lose votes and influence.

The Socialist International was scheduled to meet in Paris in September 1900, and Lafargue doubted that other parties would support the POF's fiercely antiministerialist stand. After leaving Berlin, where he attended Liebknecht's funeral in early August, he went to Belgium. He spoke, he told Guesde, to German and Belgian socialists "of different schools," and "they are all more or less for Jaurès. They don't know the situation in France, getting their information from *La Petite République* alone. To them Jaurès is still the great man of the Dreyfus

Affair.” In a subsequent and even more pessimistic letter, he reported that Edouard Anseele (from Belgium), Victor Adler (from Austria), and others “feared taking sides between us and Jaurès-Millerand” and that Adler even suggested postponing the congress. Consequently, Lafargue argued, it was in France that the Millerand question must be resolved; an international congress was not to discuss and vote resolutions on subjects dividing socialists but rather to affirm only those ideas that were universally accepted.<sup>9</sup>

Even Kautsky seemed to side with Jaurès. Earlier in the year he had asked Jaurès to write the preface for a book on socialism and parliamentarianism. Lafargue had expected the orthodox Kautsky to join heart and soul with Guesdists in the struggle against reformism in France, and so was amazed and angry at Kautsky’s refusal to denounce ministerialism on grounds of principle. “We are in ardent struggle with ministerialists headed by Jaurès,” he told Kautsky in July, after assuring him it was a matter of principles and not personalities, “and of all the French socialists, it is Jaurès you choose to support.” Accordingly, Lafargue stated his intention to stop contributing to the *Die Neue Zeit*, and for the next three years would send no articles. Not until 1903 would there be a (partial) reconciliation, when Kautsky told Lafargue the latter had been “wholly correct” in the Jaurès-Millerand controversy.<sup>10</sup>

The International’s Congress opened on September 3, 1900, in the Salle Wagram dance hall in western Paris, and the French delegation split along anticipated lines. Independents, Possibilists, Allemanists, and most autonomous federations defended ministerialism; antiministerialists included the Parti Ouvrier, Blanquists, and the revolutionary Alliance Communiste. The world’s leading socialists found themselves unable to take a definitive stand. The delegates rejected the revolutionary Enrico Ferri’s resolution prohibiting ministerial participation and instead approved Kautsky’s compromise, which ambiguously condemned in principle the participation of a single socialist in a bourgeois government but acknowledged its usefulness in times of exceptional circumstances. Because the question was one of tactics, delegates believed that only individual socialist parties could make the appropriate decision. Kautsky ruefully acknowledged the hostility shown him by the POF leadership and particularly by the Lafargues. Although Laura continued to keep him informed of family matters, not until 1908 would Kautsky and his sons again visit the Lafargues at Draveil.<sup>11</sup>

Later that month the Second General Congress of French Socialist Organizations opened its doors at the same hall. On September 27, the day before the Congress convened, Lafargue presided over a preliminary meeting of Parti Ouvrier delegates to plan a common strategy. Able to exert greater influence at home, he, Guesde, and Vaillant at once made known their hostility to anything resembling the moderation shown by the International.<sup>12</sup> Resuming his decade-long quarrel with Briand, Lafargue exchanged insults with him in a verbal duel. Briand referred to Lafargue as the “millionaire who lives in a chateau,” while Lafargue called Briand “monsieur” rather than “citoyen”—a major insult for a socialist—and described his behavior as “two-faced.”<sup>13</sup>

As the Congress showed signs of seeking a compromise, bitterness mounted on the part of the revolutionaries. When it moved to vote by delegates rather than by mandates, so ensuring a ministerialist majority, Parti Ouvrier delegates refused to accept the decision and, at the first pretext, marched out of the hall. One of their members had been stabbed in the hand, and the POF’s motion to expel the “unfraternal delegate” responsible failed to win a majority. The real reason for their departure was the realization that given their minority position they could expect little if anything from the Congress. The Guesdists declared their intention to organize themselves as a new party based on the class struggle concept. Blanquists were sympathetic but, hopeful of the Marxists’ return, did not follow their example. However, the schism opened at the Paris Congress was made complete at the Third Congress of Socialist Organizations, held at Lyons in May 1901. When the Congress thwarted their attempt to expel Millerand, Blanquists and the Alliance Communiste walked out. They joined with the Parti Ouvrier (which had boycotted the Congress) to form the revolutionary Parti Socialiste de France (in contrast to the Parti Socialiste Français), and the unity proclaimed in 1899 formally came to end.

At the Parti Ouvrier’s Roubaix Congress, held in mid-September 1901, Lafargue participated in every debate, taking a strong antiministerialist line. He was reelected to the executive committee, which aimed, he said, not “to excommunicate” but “to point out deviations.” At its first congress, held in Commentry in September 1902, the new antiministerialist party named Lafargue, together with Guesde, Vaillant, and five others, to its own executive committee.<sup>14</sup>

With more socialists at home and now even from abroad coming over to the Parti Ouvrier’s point of view, Lafargue sensed that victory

was in sight. After Millerand's first year in office, he had jubilantly proclaimed that *le cas* showed that a socialist in government was not a socialist: "We have recovered from the Millerand thing, as I never doubted we would, and it has really shown that a socialist minister is but a capitalist servant." Eager to take doctrinal and tactical advantage of the episode, Lafargue said that "Millerand, Jaurès, and Company have rendered us a vital service . . . [ministerial participation] has provided the terrain for recasting the party in a revolutionary mould and providing the ground for unity." But because Jaurès and his group could count on the support of cooperatives, trade unions, and some autonomous federations, continued vigilance was needed.<sup>15</sup>

On March 23, 1900, Lafargue spoke to the Parti Ouvrier's collectivist student group on the question of "socialism and the intellectuals," and an expanded version of his remarks was published shortly afterward in pamphlet form. The topic was prompted by his unhappiness with bourgeois intellectuals who came to socialism (Jaurès was the model in mind) and whom he saw as the cause of its loss of revolutionary fervor. This led him to examine the role of the intellectual since 1789.<sup>16</sup>

In spite of the commanding role of intellectuals in the socialist hierarchy, Lafargue showed no great respect for them, neither for their loyalty nor for their ability to take action, as reflected in his comment: "We should have to put off the triumph of socialism not to the year 2000 but to the end of the world if we had to wait upon the delicate, shrinking, and impressionable hesitancy of the intellectuals." They would, he said, serve any regime, and in the Dreyfus affair many had lacked the courage to defend one of their own, a dismissed Dreyfusard professor. "Intellectuals . . . have a long road to travel before they reach the moral plane of the working class and of the socialist party."<sup>17</sup>

Comparing the role of science in 1900 with that in the eighteenth century and reverting to an analysis developed several times before, Lafargue described the earlier variety as revolutionary and as having met the need to prepare men's minds for the coming revolution by sapping the ideological foundations of aristocratic society. But with the once revolutionary bourgeoisie having reneged on its promises and now showing interest only in amassing wealth, the science it sold to capitalism was used by the latter as a tool of exploitation. In the Age of Reason, intellectuals had furiously attacked Christianity and "institutional philosophy." When, however, the victorious bourgeoisie decided to base its new power on religion and "ordered" intellectuals to



reconstruct the church, it also commanded its scientists, philosophers, and men of letters to raise up much of what they had overthrown; and they responded with enthusiasm, suddenly transforming themselves "from revolutionaries and materialists into reactionaries and Catholics."

Only with clerical anxiety somewhat appeased did intellectuals profess evolutionary theory, but they made sure to stay in the good graces of capitalism by turning Darwinism against socialism. Now "it was no longer God or religion that condemned workers to wretchedness, but science." Never, Lafargue declared, was there such bankruptcy of intellect. Breaking with Smith and Ricardo, economists now reject the labor theory of value. Artists and writers now entertain the class that pays them. In buying and selling ideas, capitalists exploit intellectuals, who "if aware of their own real interests would come over en masse to socialism, not through philanthropy but . . . to fulfil their class obligation." Copyright laws were a prime example of intellectual exploitation: mill owners and their heirs keep their property rights forever; the owners of copyright lose their intellectual property to rapacious publishers.

Today's capitalists, he went on, in contrast to those of 1830 and 1848 "who were not afraid of gun powder," prefer to buy deputies rather than get involved in politics, deliberately overproduce intellectuals to keep their wages low, and then hire them to manage their large and complex industrial and commercial enterprises. But the managers who see themselves as an integral component of the capitalist class are in reality its servants. Both manual and intellectual workers are exploited, each selling their labor to the highest bidder; but because intellectuals lack the consciousness of manual workers, they sell themselves at ever lower rates and under capitalism are even more poorly paid. Yet because they perceive their interests as tied to those of the capitalists, he predicted, these managers would never be attracted to socialism.

Then Lafargue got to the point, and his bitterness broke through: "We welcomed joyfully the entrance of Jaurès into socialism; we thought his new presentation of our message would enable it to penetrate circles we had not been able to touch . . . We wanted the intellectuals who came to socialism to join as equal comrades, not as self-appointed leaders . . . If their peaceful habits prevent them from throwing themselves into the conflict, and if their lofty culture forbids them to take their place in the ranks of the comrades, they nevertheless

condescend to instruct us in ethics, to polish our ignorance, to teach us to think, to offer us such crumbs of science as we are able to digest, and to guide us, they modestly offer themselves to us as leaders and schoolmasters." In short, Lafargue complained, they teach that the class struggle is "out of fashion," that the concentration of capital is "a worn-out tune," and that the poverty of the working class is "diminishing."

Lafargue resented intellectuals who proposed revising socialist tactics as well as socialist theories, who said that rather than "strive to win public power by a great struggle, legal or revolutionary as the need may be, socialism must let itself be won over by every government put together by a republican coalition." Rather than have the socialist party confront all the bourgeois parties, it was to be put to the service of the most liberal among them. Rather than organize the socialist party for the class struggle, it had to accommodate any and all political compromises. Worst of all, these intellectuals proposed "to tear down the organizations which for twenty years have striven to give working people a sense of their class interests . . ."

Thus Lafargue, like the militants of the CGT—with whom he was feeling greater affinity—saw intellectuals as political opportunists whom workers would do well to distrust. He attacked Jaurès and his supporters because they lacked the kind of "intellectual professional class consciousness" deemed necessary for a correct socialist commitment. Lafargue now denounced Deville and congratulated Kautsky for his "attack" on Deville, "a reactionary among the reactionaries," who "richly deserves it."<sup>18</sup> Denounced, too, were Jaurès's attempts to establish *universités populaires*, the first of which had opened its doors in 1898, as an attempt by intellectuals to capture the minds of workers and instill them with bourgeois values. Funded by capitalists, these schools served bourgeois interests by preparing the brightest of the workers' children to manage industrial society for those who owned it. More appropriate would be the study of socialism, "the only science able to suppress their [workers'] misery and suffering."<sup>19</sup>

Lafargue rejected Jaurès's belief that qualitative improvement was possible even in a society controlled by capitalism. The development of intellectual abilities required the leisure and liberty available only "to an emancipated working class." Capitalist control of the means of mechanical production meant an "oppressed and culturally lifeless proletariat." Collectivist control, on the other hand, would so increase production as to allow the greatest amount of human development

and the most freedom “to pursue and enjoy the physical and intellectual pleasures of life.” Freed of capitalist combination, science and art would flourish, and in words reminiscent of those Trotsky would use, Lafargue painted a shining tableau: “The artist then will paint, will sing, will dance; the writer will write, the musician will compose operas, the philosopher will build systems, the chemist will analyze substances, not to gain money, not to receive a salary, not to win laurel wreaths like the victors at the Olympic Games, but to satisfy their artistic and scientific passion.”<sup>20</sup>

Later that year there appeared a book containing three earlier pamphlets: *Pius IX au paradis* (first published in Spain in 1872 and then in *L'Egalité* ten years later), *La Religion du capital*, and *Le Droit à la paresse*. Also included was *Un Appétit vendu*, first published in *Die Neue Zeit*. Despite their frenzied political activity, the Lafargues' efforts to make the writings of Marx and Engels accessible to a wider French audience showed no signs of abating. In 1901 Paul and Laura published an important anthology of Engels's writings under the title *Religion, philosophie, socialisme*. Laura translated part of Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire* and the appendix to his *Class Struggles in France* (1900), and the two were responsible for the translation of *Theses on Feuerbach* (1901).<sup>21</sup>

Early in 1903 Lafargue published in serial form one of his most original works, a study of trusts in America. Later in the year it appeared as a 146-page pamphlet entitled *Les Trusts américains, leur action économique, sociale, politique*. Like his earlier study of the stock exchange, it saw trusts as a new form of exploitation by virtue of their ability to provide a highly developed mechanism to secure surplus labor. Aware of the presence of large American firms in Europe and having earlier hinted at the threat posed to competition by great national and international monopolies, Lafargue was one of the first to focus on their growth, particularly in the American economy, where economic concentration seemed most advanced. (The strong development of industry in the United States had not gone unnoticed in France. The economic historian Emile Levasseur wrote on the American worker, and the CGT's *Voix du peuple* highlighted American labor practices.)<sup>22</sup>

“A new historic phenomenon,” trusts constituted “a new phase in the evolution of capitalism,” one with so powerful an impact that “they relegate to second rank all the economic, political and scientific data that has emerged in the past forty years.” Still, the crises they

caused would hasten revolution, because capitalist centralization was leading inexorably to the organization of industry into trusts. Competition, “once proclaimed sovereign queen [and the] condition for all production, all commerce, and all capitalist morality,” was being destroyed.

Playing a key role in the establishment of trusts was finance: “that powerful pump, sucking in and exhaling, which concentrates capital and channels it to industry and commerce,” thanks to finance’s ability to find the necessary capital. Anticipating Rudolf Hilferding, the German Social Democrat who was to formulate a theory of “organized capitalism,” Lafargue pointed to the initiative of financiers in monopoly formation, as at the time of the Panama affair, and so underscored the ties between finance and industrial capital, between banks and industry.<sup>23</sup>

Yet trusts did not bring an end to the anarchy inherent in the privately owned productive process, and the crises resulting from surpluses would continue so long as productivity was driven by profit. Regardless of their attempts to regulate production, trusts were vulnerable to the same fate as independently owned establishments because of the need to remain competitive and to invest more and more in equipment, in “constant” costs, thereby creating “a superabundance of the means of production.”

The impact made by trusts on the conditions of political life was enormous: they “pulled the strings [that] moved politicians . . . like puppets.” In the United States, Lafargue asserted, they controlled both parties, and the public’s growing awareness of this explained the increase in socialist votes. Trusts formed a hidden but no less real government by controlling the press, buying legislators, and running an imperialistic foreign policy. Lafargue did not describe the mechanics of imperialism, but his analysis suggested that the desire to export capitalism accounted for much overseas expansion and that imperialism’s impact on the economic transformation of capitalism was nothing short of profound. But once again, Lafargue neglected to apply his generalizations to French peculiarities, and his analyses proved inadequate as a guide for militant action, for taking specific stands on political questions, and for formulating concrete responses.

He was content to demonstrate that trusts revealed the correctness of socialist theory, which argued the inevitability of capitalist concentration and the slow disappearance of the *classe-tampon*—the petite bourgeoisie—and “the proletarianization and increasing pauperiza-

tion of . . . capitalist civilization.” The trusts therefore paved the way for social revolution inasmuch as the industrialists they ruined joined those who fulminated against the trusts. By making it more difficult to strike, trusts obviously hurt the interests of the wage earner, but even more than single corporations, they revealed the “parasitical” nature of capitalist ownership. And by multiplying the causes of workers’ and peasants’ discontent, the trust system gave that discontent form and direction: that is, it showed the necessity of revolution. Referring to the fear of social revolution expressed by the American political boss Mark Hanna, Lafargue was led to hope that socialism in the United States would thrive and serve as a model for Europeans. Thus he argued that with the appearance of private monopolies, economic initiative had passed to the financiers. Banks and industry were united, especially in the United States, and their fortunes were intertwined. And Lafargue seemed to take delight in pointing out how his analysis refuted revisionist claims that cartels were eliminating, and not generating, economic crises.

In the September issue of the syndicalist-oriented antireformist review, *Le Mouvement socialiste*, which first appeared in 1899, Lafargue provided one of the rare occasions in which he permitted himself to expound on the socialist vision of the future—and on the need to implant socialist values in a still capitalist society. He did it, he said, to counter the charges of the Bernsteins and Jaurèses—those who “seek to domesticate socialism and have it towed by liberalism.” Such men claimed that revolutionaries had “hypnotized” their followers with an image of a distant ideal, the “Year 3000,” which required them to live in the expectation of a messianic “catastrophe” and reject the immediate advantages of an understanding and cooperation with bourgeois parties. These revisionists, Lafargue replied, were blind to the disappearance of small industrialists and to the increase in working-class misery; but even if it ultimately proved untrue, the communist ideal served as a propelling force for social progress.<sup>24</sup>

Utopian socialism, described by Lafargue as a socialism of the intellectuals, was understandably pacific, since it aimed at an association of labor and capital. In contrast, and as shown by Marx, communism emerged from economic realities. Every class that struggled for freedom envisioned an ideal opposed to that held by the ruling class. Hence his insistence that “the class struggle is first waged in the ideological world, before the physical shock of revolutionary battle [takes place].” It necessarily began with criticism of the ideas of the society

against which one rebelled, for the ideas of the ruling class, which intellectually reflected its material interests, were the commonly held ideas of that society. If slave labor was used, the prevailing ethical-religious standards justified slavery, as shown by Aristotle, the Bible, and Saint Paul. When a militaristic feudal aristocracy reigned in the Middle Ages, its Christian ethics condemned the lending of money at interest. When, as today, the rulers live on interest, money lending (finance) is an honorable profession.

The need to stress an alternate social climate and appreciate its importance in the revolutionary process thus becomes clear. "Even though the ideology of the oppressive class is imposed on it, the oppressed class nevertheless defines religious, ethical, and political ideas corresponding to its condition of life; and the hour of its emancipation is near when its conception of nature and of society confronts openly and boldly that of the ruling classes." Contemporary mass culture—thanks to the press, schools, the stage, and popular literature—disseminated and made possible the absorption of bourgeois values; that is, it constituted a counterrevolutionary force. The major task of a working-class party was to knock down the props sustaining bourgeois society, or, as Lafargue put it, to "detach the worker from the ideas and the values of the capitalist society surrounding him and substitute the as yet uncreated Marxist culture."<sup>25</sup>

Consequently, he saw as "the weapons of capitalism" not only guns, soldiers, and prisons, but also "the means of public control: popular mass education and journalism." Public education was established by the 1880s; but while illiteracy rates had fallen, the socialization of the working class had risen, and workers were more attached than before to the existing order and to its form of government. Repeating themes first developed in his criticisms of Daudet and Hugo ten years before, Lafargue found the success of artists and writers commensurate to their ability to satisfy bourgeois tastes.<sup>26</sup>

Militant socialists, then, were to follow the example of the encyclopedists of the eighteenth century; they were to undertake "a merciless criticism" of the economic, political, philosophical, historical, moral, and religious ideas of the capitalist class in order to prepare, "in every sphere of thought," the triumph of the new ideology brought into being by the proletariat.

It was also in December 1903 that Lafargue, now almost wholly reconciled with Kautsky, submitted two articles to *Die Neue Zeit* on "the historical materialism of Karl Marx." The articles contained

fewer slogans than usual and displayed a less rigid stand. Perhaps he was led to reconsider Marx's historical method because of Jaurès's growing prestige (despite the revolutionaries' victories at national and international socialist gatherings). Lafargue wrote the article, however, as a reply to Vandervelde, who had touched on the question of "Marx's idealism" in one of his own articles. Lafargue also felt compelled to explain the delay in the long-awaited revolution.<sup>27</sup>

In contrast to his remarks in the debate with Jaurès, Lafargue explained why Marxists did in fact possess something of an idealistic outlook. He now downplayed the "universalism" in Marxist theory and stressed the "variations in historical development." Economic forces and the class struggle concept still dominated causal explanations. However, as Lafargue first stated in his lectures on economic materialism delivered twenty years earlier, Marxism was seen as a method of analysis, "formulate[ed] in a workmanlike style and put to the test. Economic determinism is a new tool made available by Marx for socialists to establish a little order in the disorder of historical facts . . . it was for him only a research instrument."<sup>28</sup>

Nations developed at different rates and not at a universal pace. Even similar modes of production affected nations differently; individual national characteristics endowed a state with its own environment so that it "does not occasion historical events absolutely alike in different nations and at all moments of history . . . The historic evolution of nations, then, is not predetermined, anymore than the embryonic evolution of individuals." Nations pass through similar stages, however, because they resort to similar processes of production.

In January 1904, Millerand, already censured, was expelled by his local federation (of the Seine)—and hence from his party—in the aftermath of votes he made that ran counter to prevailing party opinion. He was, for example, unable to accept what he regarded as socialist support for unilateral disarmament.<sup>29</sup> Lafargue and the revolutionaries within the socialist movement were of course delighted by his ouster. Then in the summer of 1903 they learned that at its Dresden Congress the German Social Democratic Party passed a resolution reaffirming the orthodox conception of the class struggle—and its consequential emphasis on revolutionary tactics—to defeat the revisionist movement within its ranks. Enormously gratified, Lafargue shared the view of revolutionaries in France who anticipated seeing socialists everywhere forced to shed their gradualist trappings. They ignored Jaurès's comment that German socialists, however strong and united, lived under

an empire while those in France benefited from a democracy. Laura congratulated Kautsky on the victory he and Bebel had won over the revisionists.<sup>30</sup>

Even so, Lafargue continued to believe that the SPD lacked the recently restored revolutionary fervor displayed by French Marxists. He attributed the increase in German Social Democratic votes to its role simply as “a party of opposition.” By that, he explained to the American Marxist Daniel DeLeon, he meant that it contained reformists and, consequently, intellectuals, and so worked within the established order. In France, reformists possessed their own party, which enabled revolutionaries to act as a party of “opposition” but also as one of “revolution,” even though that, in turn, meant that it suffered rises and falls in its fortunes. Because the SPD opposed not pure capitalism (as DeLeon reported the conversation) but feudalism “soused” with capitalism, Bebel’s party was forced to take a leadership role in the parliamentary process and become—in practice if not in theory—the “embodiment of radical bourgeois reform.”<sup>31</sup>

The issue of ministerial participation was finally resolved by the Sixth Internationalist Socialist Congress, held in Amsterdam in August 1904. It accepted the German party’s Dresden resolution and called for a revolutionary strategy based on it. The delegates also insisted on the unification of socialism in France along revolutionary lines. In a debate as to whether the International’s authority should extend over its member sections, Lafargue and Guesde, reversing themselves, argued that the International’s task was to develop “a general international doctrine” and enforce its application. Jaurès and Vandervelde retorted that it was not the role of the International to expel members or enforce doctrinal orthodoxy, but Marcel Sembat said that French socialists would obey any decision taken by the parent organization.<sup>32</sup>

The two rival French parties, the Parti Socialiste Français and the Parti Socialiste de France, each designated a committee on unification. Lafargue, together with Bracke, Sembat, Vaillant, and others, represented the latter party. Also established was a joint unification committee, which called for the withdrawal of French socialists from the left-wing parliamentary coalition. Socialist deputies were to revert to a policy of intransigent opposition and to limit their activities to the defense of working-class interests.

At a unity congress held in Paris in April 1905, Lafargue promoted this revolutionary line, and the delegates ratified the decisions taken by the joint committee. The new party was to be distinctly revolution-



ary, although some measures of social amelioration might be pursued. The goal envisaged was the collectivization of society, which was to be reached by irreducible opposition to the established bourgeois order and to the state that represented it. Socialists were to reject every means of maintaining the government, including military credits, secret funds, and the budget itself. Emphasis was placed on the international organization of the proletariat and on class action, and the basic texts approved by the congress omitted references to the nation and to the legal conquest of power. For the sake of unity, Jaurès and a majority of the reformists, regardless of the objections of moderates who favored electoral coalitions, agreed. In 1905 the unified socialist party, or the French section of the Workers' International (SFIO), was born. The revolutionaries had triumphed. Lafargue believed himself vindicated. The Parti Ouvrier, he remained convinced, had lost influence in French socialism because of Guesde's faulty strategy in the Dreyfus affair, and the doctrinal and strategic renewal that followed in the wake of Millerand's participation had justified his criticism. Like Jaurès, Lafargue would honor the unity reached and for the rest of his life would support the compromises necessary to maintain it. Compromise would prove necessary, for as will be seen, the return to revolution was to prove incomplete, and a tacit acceptance of reformist tactics was to reemerge in both French and German socialism. But unlike his great rival, Lafargue would do everything possible to maintain a strong Marxist presence within French socialism.

## 16 A Force Retarding Human Progress

Lafargue had long shown an interest in what he called the “woman question.” His reading of Marxist texts (the *Communist Manifesto* stated flatly that “the bourgeois sees in his wife a mere instrument of production . . . to be exploited”), his friendships with socialist feminists such as Paule Mink and Louise Michel, and the influence exerted by Laura had all turned his attention to it.

Even before they emerged as a distinct party, Guesdists had promised to ask for complete equality of the sexes at the 1879 and 1880 Workers’ Congresses, and their program and the “commentary” on it fulfilled the promises made. By the mid-1880s, however, Guesde had moved away from this position, arguing that women’s rights, like other reforms, would come on the heels of a proletarian revolution and that it was a misapplication of resources to work for civil and political liberties for women (i.e., bourgeois liberties) before the revolution. A collectivist women’s group established in late 1880, the Union des Femmes, found these views limited and even antifeminist. Although as early as 1866 nearly a third of the nonagricultural labor force consisted of women, and at the turn of the century four million French women worked outside the home, a vast gulf separated party rhetoric from party practice.<sup>1</sup>

Still, feminists—such as Léonie Rouzade and two popular former *communardes*, Paule Mink and Louise Michel, whose deportations had set back the feminist cause—could be found on POF platforms. They were joined in 1893 by Aline Valette, who that year became the only woman to serve on the Parti Ouvrier’s executive committee (and would remain there until her death in 1899).<sup>2</sup> We have seen that women played an active part in the campaign to elect Lafargue from his prison cell in 1891 after the Fourmies shootings, when female workers and housewives appealed to their sisters in Lille to get out the vote. The Parti Ouvrier demanded reforms to improve the lives of

children; it now talked to women as workers and found a part for them in party activities.

However, by the mid-1890s feminist policy had once more changed. As the Guesdists established a formal centralized political party and set out to win elections, the importance attached to women's groups diminished, and by the turn of the century there was no organizational militancy left for them. Fearful of alienating male workers (women were denied the right to vote until after World War II), the party placed emphasis on the traditional role for women as wives and mothers rather than on equality for them in the workforce. The Parti Ouvrier made use of female orators such as Mink and Valette but refused to back female candidates, denounced "bourgeois feminism," again postponed female emancipation until after the revolution, and marginalized women who tried to combine socialism and feminism.<sup>3</sup>

Also on the defensive because of employers' attacks on their patriotism, Guesdists were all the more inclined to strengthen their profamily line. And by the mid-1890s, the party dropped its demands for complete gender equality as a result of its efforts to court male allegiance, efforts seemingly crowned by its growing success at the ballot box. Socialist women themselves split on the question: some, like Mink, urged that women appear alongside men in regular party sections, while Clara Zetkin, a leading exponent of feminism in the German party, wanted a separate identity for women's groups.

The new strategy of winning elections and embracing reform—the strategy followed between the municipal elections of 1892 and the Guesdist setback in 1898—thus had profound implications for women. As the POF reshaped its propaganda to fit the prejudices of indifferent or even hostile men (i.e., to downplay women's rights and so reinforce traditional male preconceptions about their "natural role"), women who had earlier been active in party matters lost interest.<sup>4</sup> As the ties that had linked the party to its female constituency in the 1880s weakened, women began to leave POF affiliates and unions. After unification, SFIO leaders similarly opposed joining in the campaign for women's right to vote, fearing male opposition and the participation of socialist women in a bourgeois-led struggle. This may help to explain why women, who comprised sixteen percent of the German Social Democratic Party's membership and fifteen percent of the underground in tsarist Russia, accounted for only two to three percent of the SFIO's membership by the outbreak of World War I. Still, by proposing and voting for laws that protected women from the worst working conditions (and admittedly some of the best-paying

jobs, like night work), and by arguing, correctly, that work for most proletarian women meant long, hard, underpaid labor, the French Socialist Party added to its vote.

The occasional references Lafargue had made to the “woman question” reflected the ambiguities within party thinking, and his later—and major—contribution to the debate was to reveal yet another divergence from his party’s position. His 1886 article in *La Nouvelle Revue* on songs and popular marriage ceremonies stated that although marriage held the promise of protection and respect for women, they were in reality put at the mercy of their husbands. Together with other French socialists, he had opposed Malthusian theories popular in the nineteenth century. Rejecting explanations of demographic stagnation based on race or geography, he blamed instead the bourgeois economy, which required parsimonious living—and hence fewer children—for survival. He also blamed the necessity of passing land on to a single son and the debilitating consequences of the long working day both on fertility and child raising. To assure a brighter future for the nation, Lafargue as a deputy favored legislation providing generous leaves of absence for pregnant women.<sup>5</sup>

Thus while he voiced oft-repeated pleas for greater liberation, Lafargue’s idealization of women required him to limit their role to that of servicing the family, performing traditional household chores, and bearing children. He was critical of capitalism for “tearing” working-class women from their homes and forcing them to labor in factories. But his primary concern was less the exploitation of women in the workplace than the neglect of the household that resulted. In a lengthy newspaper article on the family published in 1890, and in his *Origin of Property*, Lafargue approvingly described women’s work in preindustrial society as centered in the home: in spinning, knitting, sewing, and cooking.<sup>6</sup> Industrial capitalist society had brought an end to their “natural duties”: women were forced to compete with men for jobs outside the home. Bourgeois women were no less fortunate, fleeing “natural” family life and maternity for “adulterous love affairs to escape boredom.” The solution lay in a fully industrialized socialist society; the same machinery that had forced women from the family to the factory would, if properly managed for consumption and not for profit, provide the leisure that would enable working-class women, and presumably bourgeois as well, to “return” to the domestic *foyer* and to their rightful role as initiators, the role revealed in the myths and legends of antiquity.

Lafargue’s disdain for bourgeois women remained constant. He

found them “apathetic, overly sensitive, weak, and idle creatures” who preferred adultery to maternity. This attitude may have accounted for his attempts to idealize working women. At a meeting of women in the Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing area, called to consider the role working women were to play in the socialist movement, Lafargue insisted on organization as the means to improve conditions in the mills. He asked for increased wages for female workers and free maternity care, but he also told the three hundred women listening to him that their place was in the home. This could not be achieved under capitalism; it would be under socialism. On another occasion when women on strike outside Lille appealed to their socialist deputy for help, he suggested they turn to local socialist women’s groups, although the latter had shown more interest in campaigning for free school meals than for higher wages. He endowed women with virtues based on sex and not class: he saw them as “selfless mothers” and as fulfilling themselves by giving “devoted service to the family.”<sup>7</sup>

Not until 1904 did Lafargue devote a pamphlet-length article to “the woman question.”<sup>8</sup> He continued to equate her subordination with larger class concerns and more specifically with criticisms of bourgeois society; however, the pamphlet also showed Lafargue’s evolution from a position of seeking protection for women whose real place lay in the home to a more contemporary feminist stand, although admittedly he never retreated from a certain idealization of the preindustrial artisan family.<sup>9</sup> By 1904–1905, nonsocialist unions were trying to fill the vacuum left by organized socialism’s abandonment of working women. The CGT was enjoying some success here, and bourgeois feminists led by Marguerite Durand were establishing women’s unions. This prompted rethinking by the Guesdist wing of the SFIO and accounted for their reception of Dr. Madeleine Pelletier, a socialist-feminist and the first female psychiatrist in France.

In *La Question de la femme*, Lafargue appeared to have left behind many of his earlier beliefs. That a woman ought to remain at home and devote her activity to housekeeping, caring for her husband, and “manufacturing and nourishing children” was now considered a “bourgeois ideal.” This ideal may have appeared reasonable through the course of centuries because it corresponded to economic realities, but it was “no longer anything more than an ideological survival since these [realities] have ceased to exist.” (111) Onetime household tasks such as spinning and baking had been assumed by capitalist industry. Whereas previously the husband (at least those with means) had con-

tributed capital to the union, marriage now issued more from an association of capital from both parties. And because most fathers and husbands had low incomes, women, aside from the most wealthy, were now required to work outside the home.

Because bourgeois men feared female competition, the intellectuals in their employ had convinced themselves that women were biologically inferior and hence incapable of higher education and of possessing the attention, energy, and ability required in professional life. To refute this, Lafargue cited Bachofen, Morgan, and other anthropologists who argued that matriarchy had preceded patriarchy. Reflecting material realities, mythology taught that women were deified before men. Then, to demonstrate the greater extent of women's physical as well as intellectual prowess, he drew on his medical background and pointed to the longevity tables of life insurance companies, physiological studies from Paris maternity hospitals (showing, he said, that most organs, including the brain, of female fetuses weighed more than their male equivalents), as well as the success of the (few) women admitted to universities. (118–125)

Indeed, women's continued subjugation threatened disastrous consequences for the human species in its entirety. In words resembling those of John Stuart Mill (in his own essay on the question), Lafargue asserted that "man, by systematically depriving women of the means of development, material and intellectual, has made of her a force retarding human progress." (132) The "senile immobility" in which China "stagnated for over a thousand years" was attributed to that country's degradation of women. That Western civilization, in terms of reaching its potential, had also declined was revealed by the superiority of the writers of classical antiquity over the moderns. And contributing in large measure to this arrest in human development were the "restraints placed on women." (133–134)

If in the West capitalism now encouraged the education of a woman, it did so less to emancipate her than to make her eligible for employment—at lower wages under the pretext that her needs were fewer—and so to exploit her more effectively. To the burdens of the past—continued domination by husband or father—there were added the miseries of free labor. "When her daily toil in the shop, the office, or at school is ended, her labor in the household begins." (134–136)

Her servitude, which began with the establishment of private property, could end only with its abolition. Only a society based on common ownership would free women and, as had been the case in

primitive societies, allow the full development of their physical and intellectual faculties. (136–138) Hence Lafargue continued to associate the emancipation of women with the emancipation of labor, a position seconded by Valette. She, too, insisted on working for political change, for collectivism, and predicted that emancipation would follow. Only in his closing sentence, which contradicted everything that went before, did Lafargue return to his earlier view of the traditional role women should play, when he exalted motherhood rather than insist that the burden it posed be reduced. “Motherhood and love,” he said, “will permit woman [presumably in the future communist society] to regain the higher position which she occupied in primitive societies . . .” (138)<sup>10</sup>

Was it Laura’s influence—and specifically her partnership with her husband in making the works of Marx and Engels available to a French audience—that contributed to, if not accounted for, Lafargue’s evolution? Her contributions to the expansion of Marxism by translating still unknown works had won the attention and admiration even of political enemies. In his book *La Fin d’un monde*, Edouard Drumont commented that she was “a remarkable woman even in the opinion of some very Catholic economists, very much opposed to Marxism but who could not help themselves from admiring in an adversary a very curious and keen intelligence.”<sup>11</sup> Certainly her husband was now convinced that the logical consequences of the participation of women in social production (made possible by capitalism) had replaced “the ideal of the artisan”—that of the wife as nothing but a housekeeper—with a new ideal (first drawn, “as usual,” by laborers) of the woman as “companion in the economic and political struggle to raise wages and emancipate labor.” If bourgeois men failed to see how dated earlier perceptions were, bourgeois women had begun to protest against the “domestic slavery” and “stunted development” they endured. Indeed, the more bold among them were already demanding sexual equality. (114)

Lafargue’s earlier position, and to some extent the one that he maintained even after his 1904 essay, differed from that of Engels: for the latter, socialism would free women from some of the burdens of maternity and permit their full development. But for the vulgarizers in the POE, as a student of the subject noted, and especially for Lafargue, “there remained beneath the surface froth of Marxism an undercurrent of ideas one is tempted to call Latin, Catholic, or Proudhonist,” and these ideas “reinforced traditional concepts of women’s role.”

Maternity required women to remain in the home, and the socialist revolution would make this possible. In terms of the evils of industrialization, this vision was “generous, humane, and understandable,” but narrow and anachronistic compared to the vision of Marx and Engels, who saw “wage labor giving women the economic foundations for future independence.” The path for Marx and Engels, one may argue, lay not from the factory back to the home but through the factory on to independence.<sup>12</sup>

Lafargue had revealed his thoughts on marriage in capitalist society in an important article in 1901 and repeated them in his 1904 essay.<sup>13</sup> He set himself the task of imagining the nature of relations among men, women, and children in future communist society and speculated that the institution of marriage might be replaced by collective responsibility for raising and educating children and by freer sexual relations between men and women. When, in a Roubaix speech on the development of the family, Lafargue suggested that in a future leisured society, made possible by the widespread availability of labor-saving machinery, women would be “free to be polygamous or monogamous” as they preferred, his view of women’s liberated sexuality drew gasps from the audience, and then applause. However, he denied that the future behavior of either sex could be predicted: he said only that men and women need not come together or be separated by “sordid material interests.” Taking a decidedly Fourierist stand, Lafargue maintained that as a consequence of basing sexual selection on the physical and mental characteristics—and not the economic qualities—of the prospective partner, the species in a Darwinian sense could only be perfected. In a society of free and equal men and women, as in the animal kingdom, men, no longer able to “purchase” women, would have to display “physical and intellectual abilities to win their sweethearts.” (138)

Once more, Lafargue was dealing with abstractions, and his vision of marriage disappearing in communist society, of the restoration of women’s superior role, of the collectivity assuming the responsibility for child rearing, of the end of the patriarchal family, all ran counter to the aspirations of the vast majority of French workers, unionized or not, whose preference for women as homemakers had been voted on in numerous “congrès ouvriers.”<sup>14</sup> Proudhon’s influence on French labor remained strong: workers agreed with him that equality, if it existed, meant equivalence in separate spheres. For most men of the left in nineteenth-century France (and elsewhere), it was one thing to call



for revolutionary changes in political and economic life, quite another to call for them in private life.

In the January 15, 1904, issue of *Le Mouvement socialiste*, Lafargue published a lengthy article on "Christian Charity." Shortly afterward a German version appeared in *Die Neue Zeit* in three installments; it was published as a pamphlet later in the same year and republished in 1905, 1931, 1936, and 1937.<sup>15</sup> That he chose *Le Mouvement socialiste* for this and other articles requires explanation, for although its editors maintained that the journal was anchored in the socialist movement and would report on the movement's progress toward unity, they made it clear that they would do so in a critical way. The editors—one of whom was Lafargue's nephew, the twenty-three-year-old Jean Longuet—identified themselves as revolutionary intellectuals committed to the organization of the proletariat in a class-based party. Also active in management were Emile Buré; Paul Dramas, another journalist who had written for *L'Ere nouvelle* and *Le Socialiste*, but who had quit the POF because he had favored Millerand's participation in the government; Edouard Berth, an ardent disciple of Sorel; and especially Hubert Lagardelle. Lagardelle, born in 1875, and now a Guesdist turning toward revolutionary syndicalism, was the driving force behind the review. And in insisting that the emancipation of the workers must be accomplished by the workers themselves, *Le Mouvement socialiste* revealed a syndicalist orientation. That Lafargue was to publish several articles in it reveals an affinity for revolutionary syndicalism that was to strengthen in the years to come.

The review provided economic and historical analyses, and news of trade union activities and foreign workers' parties. It also published translations of socialist texts. Whether providing political coverage or theoretical analyses, the articles discussed their subject matter in depth. Despite their syndicalist and Sorelian leanings, the editors wanted to appeal to a diverse socialist readership, and so published occasional articles by Jaurès, Charles Longuet, Vandervelde, and a smattering of foreigners such as Mehring and Croce.<sup>16</sup> Of the three Marxist reviews that had thus far appeared—*L'Ere nouvelle*, *Le Devenir social*, and *Le Mouvement socialiste*—the last enjoyed the widest circulation and was therefore the most economically secure.

In his article on Christian charity, Lafargue took a strong anti-Christian stand. The religion, he charged, "corrupts" the poor by accustoming them to patiently endure misery. The first Christians were hailed as communists, sharing possessions rather than accepting char-

ity. Still, in spite of Christian claims to the contrary, charity antedated Christianity. But when practiced by the ancient Greeks and Romans, charity was seen as a duty and not as an act of benevolence. Dwelling on themes suggested in *The Right to Be Lazy* and in the caustic pamphlet published in 1887, *La Religion du capital*, Lafargue regretted the French Revolution's elimination of saints' days and the intensification of labor that resulted from fewer holidays.

Nonetheless, Lafargue still wanted to appear in "respectable bourgeois journals." In the December 1904 issue of *La Revue des idées*, he published another article on mythology, this time on the story of Prometheus. Inspired by his wish to criticize the findings of an orientalist, M. F. Baudry, he tried once more to demonstrate the legitimacy of matriarchal theory.<sup>17</sup> The Promethean myth was seen as a symbolic representation of the memories of the struggle that tore apart tribal life in prehistoric Hellas, struggles that resulted in the replacement of the matriarchal with the patriarchal family. Citing his authorities, Morgan and Bachofen, Lafargue saw Prometheus as advising Zeus, who in his quest for supremacy chased the goddesses from Olympus.

Despite Lafargue's success on the literary front, party conflicts were looming. Regardless of its formal commitment to revolutionary Marxism, Guesdists within the unified SFIO soon found themselves in a minority, opposed both to "Jaurèssists" on their right and to "Hervéists" or "insurrectionnels"—antiparliamentarians and antimilitarists—on their left. The two leaders, Lafargue and Guesde, were increasingly seen as "grand old men" by their admirers and as "anachronistic nuisances and obstructionists" by their detractors.<sup>18</sup>

Although French socialism accepted the revolutionary contours insisted on by the Second International, to Lafargue's dismay reformist tactics were once again pursued, which apparently justified many of the concessions made by Jaurès. Responsible for this renewed reformism were Jaurès's personal superiority, his sense of reality, and his ability to synthesize, to offer concrete solutions to such problems as winning power and preventing war, and to effectively win support for them.

Parti Ouvrier people seemed unable to cope, unable to provide useful analyses of these issues, and unable to present solutions: they appeared destined to repeat slogans and attack stereotypes, to pursue the dictates of rigid orthodoxy, and so provided little competition. Vailant and his followers sided with Jaurès against their former POF allies, as did new recruits, tired of sterile quarrels. It was perhaps

symbolic of their inadequacies that both Lafargue and Guesde republished their old writings; but while the former began to incline toward syndicalism, the latter seemed unable to understand a changing world.<sup>19</sup>

Moreover, the Guesdist power base in the Nord was declining: the textile centers were not expanding, and the party recruiters were not making inroads in the iron and steel industry that was replacing them. In addition, Guesdists were challenged in their own strongholds, such as Lille, by more revolutionary elements within the labor movement.<sup>20</sup> The Parti Ouvrier chiefs, confronted both by reformists and revolutionary syndicalists, accepted the hard truth that their competitors could not be eliminated. Still, the tendency that Guesde and others represented was expressed in the party press, in congresses, and in books and brochures. Though buffeted by forces on their right and left, which eased them toward a more centrist position, Guesdists made their voice heard in the debates on the three chief issues with which the SFIO was preoccupied during the decade before 1914: socialist-syndicalist relations, reformism, and the threat of war.

Marxists of the POF persuasion were well represented on the new party newspaper, *L'Humanité*. It had first appeared on April 18, 1904, as a "journal socialiste" but reflected reformist viewpoints. Guesdists entered after unity was established, joining writers like Gustave Rouanet, of *La Revue socialiste*; René Viviani, who came into political life as Millerand's assistant; and the moderate socialist François de Pressense. Lafargue, Allemane, Jean Longuet, and Alexandre Bracke (a pseudonym for Desrousseaux) were important contributors. A former professor of philology, Bracke became politically active in 1898; he was a POF secretary, where he had served as Guesde's "right arm."<sup>21</sup>

*Le Socialiste* survived as a Guesdist journal, even though its masthead proclaimed it the "Organe central du Parti socialiste." It showed a formalism and growing rigidity within the former POE, and Lenin, back in France, noted its "lifelessness." In fact, it was becoming a compilation of official texts. Its circulation by 1910 had fallen to about three thousand; and by then Lafargue had gradually abandoned his association with the newspaper.<sup>22</sup> Even in 1904–1905 he was averaging only an article a month; but these pieces were already revealing his concern with maintaining a revolutionary presence within his party while ensuring its survival.

In early October 1905, Lafargue returned from the SFIO's second

national congress, held at Chalon, where he had been unable to prevail against what he saw as Guesde's and the unified party's mounting reformism. Although his physical appearance favorably impressed observers—one American in particular at the Amsterdam Congress was struck by Lafargue's "fine jovial face . . . merry twinkling eyes," and "white hair in abundance"—Laura, who accompanied him, described her husband as "a little tired."<sup>23</sup> No doubt one reason was the tactical defeat he had suffered on the question of which electoral policy the party was to follow in the coming 1906 national legislative elections. Guesde had proposed that there be a socialist candidate wherever there was a socialist federation and that on a runoff vote, should one be required, the party support the best-placed left-wing candidate. His motions were seconded by both Jaurès and Marcel Cachin, a thirty-five-year-old Bordeaux militant, the son of a gendarme who had been a teacher and then editor of a socialist newspaper in the Gironde Department.

Lafargue had rejected this revival of "republican discipline." The Republic, he charged, remained in the hands of a capitalist minority. The goal was not the election of socialist deputies but the widespread adoption of socialist ideas, which, he believed, accorded with the hard line that had triumphed at the unity congress. This reflected Lafargue's long-standing distrust of the *élus*, the deputies who believed that once elected they owed responsibility to their voters rather than to their party and who consequently favored reform over revolution. Lafargue preferred that in the event that no socialist candidate competed, the socialist party remain neutral on the runoff vote. The party, Lafargue had pleaded, was not to be put on the defensive and "play the game of reactionaries [who] only want working-class votes." Jaurès had countered that it was necessary to defend existing freedoms and to press for new reforms. The question was referred to a specially designated committee on electoral tactics. On the third day, that committee reported its findings: to run candidates wherever possible on the first vote and to leave it to the individual federations to decide on the second.<sup>24</sup> This was the compromise Guesde and a majority accepted, but the question would come up again before the 1910 election.

Another source of friction between Guesde and Lafargue was the latter's resentment of the influence of younger men, especially Alexandre Zévaès, on Guesde. In early February 1900, a Sûreté agent noted that "Guesde has found a lieutenant after his own heart in Zévaès." That Guesde made decisions without consulting Lafargue and the

party executive committee, and that such decisions were influenced by Zévaès and other confidants, became clear the following July. Apparently, Guesde then asked Liebknecht for SPD funds (1,500 francs) to keep *Le Socialiste* afloat. When he learned of the request (from Liebknecht), Lafargue told the SPD leader that not only was he “opposed to asking foreigners for money that they need for their own battles,” but that he was upset at not having been informed. He expressed his unhappiness to Guesde. While Lafargue “always acted loyally,” clearing draft speeches and articles in advance, “you do not work frankly with your comrades,” he told his colleague; “you like to resort to a clumsy and useless Machiavellianism which disheartens your best friends.” Lafargue accused Guesde of having “plotted time and again” with others, including Zévaès. “One must, as I do,” he concluded, “value highly your other qualities in order not to be offended by these dealings and in order not to break with you.”<sup>25</sup>

Lafargue’s reference to “time and again” suggests that this was not the first unilateral decision made by Guesde and that despite their differences (over the appropriate response to the Boulanger and Dreyfus affairs, to take the two most important examples) Lafargue remained loyal for the sake of party unity. Did generational jealousies play a role? Thirty years younger than Lafargue, Zévaès was born after the Commune. A Sûreté informer at a 1903 congress mentioned the growing importance of the younger socialists present: Guesde’s appeal had plummeted while Lafargue’s authority was nonexistent.<sup>26</sup> Even before unification, the Parti Ouvrier’s influence in French socialism, particularly after the 1898 election, had been falling, and the militancy insisted on by its chiefs at the time of *le cas Millerand* was being questioned. Zévaès typified a new generation aspiring to power, and his relationship with Lafargue may well have shown intergenerational strife.<sup>27</sup> Yet Lafargue had cause for complaint: Zévaès had repudiated party loyalty and worked for nationalist support in his (losing) Chamber electoral campaign in 1902. His duplicity and attempt to divide the party in Grenoble prompted Lafargue to seek his expulsion from socialist ranks, and Zévaès never forgave him. Upset by this, and by his diminished importance within the party, Lafargue at the time hinted he might step down from the committee of the Parti Socialiste de France executive.<sup>28</sup> Within a few years, his support of socialist unity and his willingness to ally with those who most ardently defended it (i.e., Jaurès) were to make the break with Guesde final.

As ever, research and writing appeared more appealing than intra-

party squabbling, and Lafargue eagerly resumed both. His interests were becoming ever more philosophical and linguistic. He had told Kautsky in 1899 that he was preparing articles on the origins of abstract ideas, "one of the very few applications of Marxist theory to philosophical problems." And articles on the origins of the ideas of justice and goodness began to appear in *Die Neue Zeit* later that year. In the spring of 1905, he published a lengthy article on "the causes of the belief in God," a theme addressed in his 1882 lectures on economic materialism. It first appeared in a socialist review, was published in Kautsky's *Die Neue Zeit* in 1899 after having been translated into German, and later in the year was published in French as a separate pamphlet. A compilation of these articles was published a decade later as *Le Déterminisme économique de Karl Marx, recherches sur l'origine et l'évolution des idées de justice, du bien, de l'âme et de Dieu*. In attempting to provide materialistic explanations for such abstractions as "justice," "goodness," the "soul," and "God," Lafargue was, of course, once more lashing out at what he saw as the adversaries of Marxist philosophy.<sup>29</sup>

He asked why an educated bourgeoisie for the most part remained Christian while an "ignorant" proletariat showed a stubborn indifference to religious matters. (To show the proletariat's indifference, Lafargue cited Charles Booth's reports on London's East End but offered no proof of the bourgeois religious affiliation.) Modern capitalism, he answered, had to accept the notion of a single god. The needs of commerce forced the growing bourgeoisie to "demunicipalize" the divinities and to worship a cosmopolitan god. Earlier attempts to set up a god worshiped by both residents and strangers were limited or ephemeral. Only in modern capitalism, where property is impersonal, "unknown" to the shareholder, could the proper mindset for a universal and impersonal god again take root. For the bourgeoisie as a class, the "uncontrollability of capitalist social relations replaced the earlier incomprehension and unpredictability of nature as the source of religious belief." Because of the crises of fortune and misfortune that revealed the "instability and insecurity" of capitalism, the bourgeoisie embraced the immortality of the soul, and for its own selfish reasons the bourgeoisie sought to teach religion to all whom it exploited—workers, women, and others—to preoccupy them and take up their energies.

Why did the proletarian alone remain indifferent to religion? Because, said Lafargue, "he knows no celestial father gives him his daily

bread, even if he prays from morning til night.” His industrial life limited the influence that the “natural milieu” (i.e., nature) could exert on him. The wage earner saw crises not as economic inevitabilities but as the fault of the *patron*. Machinery was no mystery to him, as thunder was to the peasant, because he and his coworkers had built the machines. This indifference was new in history, and Lafargue took hope that when the means of production were one day owned and controlled by producers, when inequality vanished, the social order would become explicable, no longer requiring belief in God. Hence, with few nuances and in a rote and schematic—and yet audacious—way, he tried to find in the ownership of the means of production the origin of moral ideas.

Lafargue’s text was rambling and filled with irrelevancies, and lacked any semblance of chronological development. While the article appeared learned and cited numerous authorities, its author enormous speculative leaps, which, however insightful, could not be sustained by the evidence available. Yet its importance lies in the attempt rather than in the result. He regretted that the materialistic origins of certain abstract ideas, which in “earlier historical periods” had been grasped in a general and inexact way, had been ideologically obscured as a class-based society developed. However, these regrets, and the speculation that gave rise to them, were set aside when Lafargue plunged into the debate over socialist-syndicalist relations that threatened to sunder the newly unified party.

## 17 The Unperceived Force

In his last years, Lafargue once more broke with Guesde and his followers, who under the latter's leadership once more embraced parliamentary strategies, regardless of the commitment made by socialists to revolution. Consequently, Lafargue came to sympathize with, if not wholly endorse, the syndicalists' right to pursue an independent, nonpolitical path to working-class emancipation. Paradoxically, this brought him closer to Jaurès, who similarly acknowledged the necessity of a syndicalist and, if required, insurrectionalist alternative. However, in order to understand these conflicts, some background is necessary.

Not everyone within the unified socialist party accepted the drift toward growing reliance on reformist strategies and cooperation with bourgeois parties. With the issue of ministerial participation finally removed, these disagreements resurfaced. Militant syndicalists, particularly the anarchists among them who had infiltrated the trade unions to seek a broader basis of support, saw the SFIO as a reformist party scarcely different from the progressive bourgeois elements with which it was once more willing to associate. They charged that socialists differed little from Clemenceau's Radicals.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, Jaurès and Vaillant believed that the party should aim directly at winning political offices. "Like all struggles," Vaillant told the Saint-Etienne Congress in 1909, "electoral action has real value only when victory is sought." Hence his and Jaurès's preference for socialist cooperation with other parties on the second ballot in legislative and municipal elections.<sup>2</sup>

Guesde seemed to agree. Neither violent revolution nor legal political action can be ruled out, he told the SFIO's Nancy Congress in 1907.<sup>3</sup> Even so, he leaned toward legislative action and became increasingly critical of the Yonne Federation's Gustave Hervé, whose powerful articles attacking patriotism and military service were attracting attention.



In spite of the revolutionary contours that the united party insisted on, most Guesdists accepted the reformism advocated by a majority within the SFIO. Only in the Isère and Haute-Vienne Departments did a weak radical opposition exist, and among the Parti Ouvrier chiefs only Lafargue wanted to accommodate Hervé. As a result, he found himself increasingly out of touch with his old colleagues. Deville's oft-mentioned remark to Lafargue is appropriate here: "You had the opportunity to know Marx; without it you would have been one of our most brilliant anarchists." Hervé himself saw Lafargue as "a stray anarchist among the Guesdists."<sup>4</sup>

Hervé fulminated against the military and the patriotic ideal in his antimilitarist weekly *La Guerre sociale*, which he began to publish at the end of 1906. It was the labor movement, long resentful of military intervention in strikes, that spearheaded the antimilitarist campaign, thanks to its syndicalist tradition, its antipolitical outlook, and its new stress on violence. While Hervé's call for insurrection in the event of war never won widespread support, it gained a hold on militant workers.<sup>5</sup> Socialist *élus* were understandably fearful of the danger Hervéism presented, but it was the former Parti Ouvrier contingent that police analysts saw as revolutionary syndicalism's most "eager" opponents, precisely because these Guesdists regarded themselves as the defenders of Marxist orthodoxy.<sup>6</sup> Hervéism condemned not only militarism but the integration of socialism into the nation, at least the nation under capitalism. Hence the description of Hervéism by both the police of the time and today's historians as a sort of "neo-anarchism."<sup>7</sup> To a considerable extent because the anarchists were joining them, revolutionary syndicalists ("anarcho-syndicalists"), like the anarchists, showed the same suspicion of bourgeois legality, the same antimilitarism, and the same romantic exaltation of the class struggle, even to the point of glorifying insurrection and reliance on what seemed the only weapons at their disposal: sabotage and the strike. The inability of the Socialist Party to enact legislation compatible with its electoral strength (because of conservative opposition and the resistance of anti-reformist elements within labor itself) intensified the CGT's hostility to parliamentary socialism. Seen from this perspective, Hervéism represented a return within socialism of the revolutionary anarchism repudiated in 1896. More so than Jaurès, who appeared ready for proletarian action of some kind, Guesde believed in the need to fight Hervéism. Lafargue, however, showed mounting sympathy for it.

At its Amiens Congress in October 1906, the CGT, resentful of

socialist attempts to annex its federation, in its famous charter repudiated all affiliation with political groupings. It was to be bound by no political party or political program. Instead it declared the general strike the best weapon to overturn capitalist society, to open the way to an economy of workers' *syndicats*, the "autonomous and collective societies" of producers envisioned by Proudhon and Bakunin. The direct action proposed appealed only to a minority, repelled others, and would arouse employers and the state to brutal repression. But the nation's largest labor organization was now prepared to find solutions outside the legally constituted framework.

Reelected by Roubaix voters to the Chamber of Deputies in 1906, Guesde was especially disturbed. He saw the division between socialism and syndicalism as effectively weakening the unions and, given the links between economic and political power in capitalist society, as untenable in theory.<sup>8</sup> Guesde and those who agreed with him were of course concerned with maintaining the orthodoxy of political—not economic—action as paramount and with retaining their individuality within the unified party. Guesde's formula, "by all the means even the legal ones" translated into practice as "only the legal ones" and effectively cut Guesdists off from both a republican reservoir (Jaurès and his supporters) and the revolutionary current moving the CGT. When it became clear they had lost their leadership role within the SFIO, Guesdists returned to electoralism and became the right wing of the unified socialist party—in reality if not in rhetoric. It is significant that Guesde's old ally Vaillant distanced himself and went over to Jaurès.<sup>9</sup> Lafargue too separated himself but leaned toward syndicalism.

The Guesdists' attitude toward syndicalism smacked of the old POF's sectarianism, and Lafargue rejected their hostility to a labor force independent of the socialist party. Although he had long held the orthodox Marxist stand regarding the general strike as inconsistent with the emphasis to be placed on political action, he had now come to believe that a reciprocal relationship must exist between trade unions and party, that Guesdists underestimated day-to-day direct struggle as a means of raising class consciousness, and that the growing reliance on reform through parliamentary action was widening the gap between socialists and syndicalists. And in so believing, Lafargue was finding himself closer to Jaurès than to Guesde.

Jaurès's willingness to recognize the independence of the CGT in the pre-World War I years and his readiness to consider insurrection at a time of threatening war inclined him toward the new militancy that

characterized the last decade of his life—and which may have accounted for the departure of Lucien Herr and Léon Blum from *L'Humanité*.<sup>10</sup> Yet as long ago as 1894, Jaurès had unsuccessfully urged the Parti Ouvrier to coopt the general strike and revolutionary syndicalism rather than pay the price of “obstructionist negativism.”<sup>11</sup> No less skeptical than Guesde, Jaurès possessed an “intelligent realism” that let him see the general strike as a sign of “authentic proletarian vigor” to be put to use against a coming war. If at London in 1896 Jaurès had sided with “les politiques” against “les grévistes” in pushing for political action against the young CGT and Bourses du Travail, he had initiated attempts at rapprochement between socialists and syndicalists.<sup>12</sup>

Lafargue first placed himself somewhere between Guesde and Jaurès, and once more differences between the two Marxist chiefs became clear. In a special 1904 issue of *Le Mouvement socialiste* on the general strike, which contained position papers and speeches from socialist and labor leaders in a number of different countries, Lafargue reiterated traditional Marxist criticism. Socialists did not organize strikes but came to the support of strikers. Strikes were a weapon of working-class defense but were incapable of emancipating labor: at best they provided a vehicle for organized political struggle. Strikes taught individual workers the need for discipline and collective effort, and hence furthered class consciousness, but provided no socialist solution to the problems faced by labor: if a strike was successful, the satisfied workers would merely return to work and submit to having “their yoke replaced.” “The general strike,” Lafargue said, “first popularized by such *arrivistes* as Briand, does not carry the revolution in its flanks; on the contrary, it is the revolution that produces the general strike.”<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, anarchist-based hostility to parliamentary struggle underestimated political action. Lafargue could not agree with Sorel (described by Rappoport as the “metaphysician of the movement”), who argued that experience taught that “democracy can work effectively to prevent the progress of socialism” and that syndicalists must initiate action against the established order. Nor could he agree with Victor Griffuelhes, who despised universal suffrage, or with so outspoken a syndicalist as Lagardelle, who said that “if the class struggle is what socialism is all about then all of socialism is to be found in syndicalism, since outside of syndicalism there is no class struggle.”<sup>14</sup> An admirer of what he saw as the “pure” syndicalism of the British trade

unions, Lafargue wanted the CGT to free itself of its libertarians (anarchists), those “still possessed of old antiparliamentarian and anti-electoral ideas.” Their removal would further understanding between syndicalists and socialists and unite political, parliamentary, and revolutionary action.<sup>15</sup>

Still, his orthodoxy did not prevent Lafargue from trying to reconcile revolutionary syndicalism with socialism in the years after unity. He had, in fact, long defended British trade unionists against charges of timidity and predicted that they would eventually rally to socialism. On the administrative council of *L'Humanité*, Lafargue in 1905 openly defended “la grève politique de masse.” He called it “la force qui s'ignore [the unperceived force].”<sup>16</sup> Similarly, at each SFIO congress he would intervene to defend class theses and condemn the growing opportunism of his party as its behavior became indistinguishable from that shown during the reformist 1890s and from other progressive bourgeois parties. He also spoke for the far left on the SFIO's executive committee and on the editorial board of *L'Humanité*. The police noted his presence at several Paris meetings of protest against tsarist repression. At a campaign meeting in late December 1905 (Lafargue was then running against Millerand in the Twelfth Arrondissement), someone in the audience asked what he thought of Hervé. According to the police informant present, Lafargue refused to criticize the insurrectionalist current Hervé represented; he had come, he replied, “to set forth his theories and program and not to discuss the personality of such and such a citizen.”<sup>17</sup>

The Russian Revolution of 1905 both stimulated and strengthened revolutionary sentiment, and in particular revived thinking about the general strike. Together with his unhappiness with the Socialist Party's de facto acceptance of reformism, it helps to explain the more incisive revolutionary course now charted by Lafargue. News of the “bloody Sunday” of January 22 reached Paris that same evening. The next day Paris dailies ran stories under big headlines, and *L'Humanité* began publishing dispatches under the title, “Vers la Révolution.” In the days that followed, the press endlessly commented on events. At the funeral of Louise Michel on January 23, speakers compared Russian workers in 1905 with those in France in 1871. In a *Humanité* editorial that morning, Jaurès expressed ardent sympathy for the massacred Russians. Beginning Tuesday, January 24 and lasting all week, students in the Latin Quarter demonstrated in the streets, condemning tsarism, expressing solidarity with Russian workers, and singing the “Interna-

tionale.” In interviews, French intellectuals such as Anatole France, Octave Mirbeau, and Marcel Prévost offered condolences. Fund-raising drives were held to benefit the families of the victims.<sup>18</sup>

French Marxists had long paid attention to developments in Russia. Beginning with its appearance in 1885, *Le Socialiste* discussed Russian affairs in at least one of every four issues, and after the turn of the century, even more frequently, in one of every two issues. Between January 1905 and January 1906, twenty-two articles and ten of fifty-two editorials were devoted to Russia. The tsarist government and France’s alliance with it were denounced relentlessly. Various Russian socialists contributed to the newspaper, which, however, tended to treat all socialist factions in Russia as equally significant: there was little analytical depth and little appreciation of the Russian Social Democratic Party’s divisive 1903 congress or of Lenin. Although most articles on Russian socialism were anonymous, some were signed, and Lafargue’s name appears most often on those in *Le Socialiste* and frequently on those in *L’Humanité*. He was regarded as something of a specialist on the subject and was responsible for about a third of the editorials in *Le Socialiste*.

Certainly the presence of Russian émigrés in Paris had long been important for Lafargue. He had kept in touch with them and invited them for lengthy discussions at Draveil. He discussed Russian affairs with his nephew, Jean Longuet (who chronicled them in *L’Humanité*), and participated regularly in relevant commemorative meetings. Four years earlier, in the April 8, 1901, issue of *Le Petit Sou*, Lafargue had seen disturbances and strikes in that country as signs of imminent revolution, and his article was republished in *L’Humanité*.<sup>19</sup> An especially important article on March 12, 1905, focused on the role of industrial workers in the Revolution. Thus, as revealed by his frequent references to it, the Russian Revolution was important in Lafargue’s development: it strengthened his resolve not to abandon revolutionary strategies and, despite his desire to maintain party unity, to condemn those who did. At his funeral in 1911, of the six foreign socialists who spoke at his gravesite, no fewer than three were Russian.<sup>20</sup>

At a preliminary meeting held in late October 1905 before the opening of the SFIO’s Chalon Congress, Lafargue said that based on the enthusiasm in the room, socialists showed they remembered recent events in Russia and would continue their unified action against the French bourgeoisie, still “bowing before the tsar.”<sup>21</sup> At the Congress itself, he spoke of his pleasure at the course of events in both Russia

and France and predicted that despite difficulties French socialists would see “the flowering of the springtime of revolution.” His proposed resolution expressing fraternity with Russian revolutionaries and insisting on links between Russian emancipation and European social revolution was easily adopted. He repeated themes previously published in *Le Socialiste*: that Marx had called Russia the backbone of European reaction for a century; that the European proletariat owed a debt to Russian workers for weakening the tsar’s power; that because of her internal history Russia had not been faced with a class struggle, but that economic development was changing this; and that now tsarism, “the champion of reaction, was unchaining . . . the social revolution.”<sup>22</sup>

In the years that followed the 1905 Revolution and the emergence of the unified socialist party, Lafargue persisted in his efforts to bring socialists and syndicalists together. Now that socialists were unified, he wrote in 1907, the unification of socialism and syndicalism was “inevitable,” and he commemorated the socialists and syndicalists who had joined to organize demonstrations in support of the Russian Revolution.<sup>23</sup> The SFIO’s 1906 Limoges Congress, held after the CGT’s adoption of its Amiens Charter, had witnessed such an attempt at coalition when delegates debated the response the SFIO was to make toward revolutionary syndicalists and insurrectionalists. Socialists could either accept the Amiens Charter or contest it by demanding an alliance between the political and industrial wings of the working class. Guesde’s answer was unequivocal: he condemned the stand taken by the labor federation. His orthodoxy held firm; he would continue to subordinate trade union activity to political activity and would work to bring “the socialist spirit” to the CGT. Most former POF members agreed and, buttressed by the powerful Nord Fédération, continued to stigmatize the CGT’s insistence on maintaining independence. Lafargue, however, led the minority among the Guesdists who opposed the subordination of syndicalism to socialism (but who constituted the majority of socialists who reconciled themselves to the Amiens Charter). Together with Jaurès, Vaillant, and Hervé, he supported a resolution recognizing the many workers who voted socialist and asking the SFIO to accept CGT independence and the general strike as a form of syndicalist action. Acknowledgment of the formal “autonomy” of the CGT and the SFIO was seen as the best hope for cooperation.<sup>24</sup>

At the next year’s Nancy Congress, the Guesdists—Lafargue and a

minority again excepted—were once more narrowly rebuffed (by twenty-six votes). Guesde had no choice but to accept his defeats; he could not break from the SFIO and condemn both the CGT and the socialist majority. Jaurès's successful "Tarn Resolution" embodied Lafargue's hopes for socialist-syndicalist unity, insofar as it called on militants "to use their best efforts to dissipate all misunderstandings between the CGT and the Socialist Party." For full working-class emancipation, the "combined force of political and trade union action was necessary," and both the general strike and the ballot box were to play a role.<sup>25</sup>

Guesde also fought the antimilitarism insisted on by French syndicalists, an antimilitarism strengthened by the Russian Revolution and particularly by the mutinies in the Russian military that some were taking as lessons applicable to the French. But Lafargue refused to close the door on possible insurrection. He opposed French loans to Russia and accused major French newspapers of accepting tsarist bribes to falsify news from Russia. He reminded the French public of Alexander III's "secret agent" who had bribed the French press to build favorable public opinion and facilitate an earlier loan. The "patriots" of the rightist press, he charged, were once more taking the tsar's money.<sup>26</sup>

In keeping with his hostility to syndicalism and the antimilitarism it favored, Guesde continued to reject revolutionary violence. At Limoges, he warned of the "dangers of exaggerated internationalism" and startled newspapermen when he spoke of "national duty." War was part of a larger struggle, he maintained, a by-product of capitalism, and would be eliminated only in the aftermath of a socialist victory. At Nancy, he denounced any recourse to the general strike in case of war, arguing that the nation with the fewest socialists would then emerge the victor and that those in France therefore had to support their country. It was then that Jaurès and Vaillant, supported by Lafargue, refused to abandon revolutionary alternatives, and once more went on record as accepting the reality of an independent trade union movement.<sup>27</sup> Thus it was that Lafargue's mounting antimilitarism drew him closer to the syndicalist stand.

He had shown concern with the issues relating to patriotism when he commented on the reference to immigrant labor in the Parti Ouvrier's 1883 Program. "To better rob French workers," he charged, "French industrialists make use of foreign workers," and the "patriotism" of the capitalist consists of his robbing the country and his com-

patriots. Even at equal salaries, foreigners are preferred because they are more docile and because the police can expel them as trouble-makers. Very much aware of the many Belgian workers in the Nord, Lafargue, together with Guesde, called for legislation to limit their numbers and those of other visitors. But the two men rejected any plans to apply a residence tax on immigrants or to call for a massive expulsion.<sup>28</sup>

At the end of 1905 and extending into early 1906, Lafargue published a series of articles, "*Le Patriotisme de la bourgeoisie*." They were prompted by an indictment of labor leaders responsible for antimilitarist posters urging conscripts to turn their weapons against any officer who ordered them to disperse striking workers. A sympathetic Lafargue evoked the memory of Fourmies but took solace in the belief that the same conscription of middle-class elements into the army would render war impossible, "because the bourgeoisie would never sacrifice its children." Nor would it take the chance of arming workers. Here, yet once more, Lafargue might have been influenced by Engels, who twenty years earlier had predicted the downfall of the French Republic in the event of war and the revolution that would follow on its heels.<sup>29</sup>

At the Nancy Congress, held in mid-August 1907, Lafargue spoke out against military service, calling it "a blood tax imposed by the bourgeoisie on workers and peasants," when the latter knew there was "nothing for them to defend." He admitted it was easier to condemn the military in republican France than in imperial Germany, but preferred that socialists display their antipatriotic and antimilitaristic feelings.<sup>30</sup> In any event, he doubted the likelihood of a European war, because the army, required by capitalists to assure their access to markets and sources of raw materials, was designed primarily for colonial wars and strikebreaking. Moreover, because the destruction inevitably generated by a European war would bring social revolution in its wake, propertied elements would scarcely risk the war that might bring an end to their rule. And unlike colonial wars, which spent the lives of workers and peasants, a major conflagration would demand the sacrifice of their sons—which increased the likelihood it would never take place. The presence of bourgeois elements (as opposed to the honor-bound nobility) in the army provided the best guarantee of peace. The extent of European rearmament also made it "practically impossible" for war to break out between France and Germany.<sup>31</sup>

Finally, the cost of war would easily surpass the millions of francs



expended on the war of 1870–1871. Thus the cessation of agricultural and industrial production, the resulting famine for victors and losers alike, the placement of almost all healthy males under the colors, the general strike that would burst forth, the prospect of an armed working class, and the unleashing of social revolution—all worked against the outbreak of war. Lafargue’s optimism, reliance on logic, and underestimation of the force of nationalism were not unique: Norman Angell, knighted and later recipient of the Nobel Prize for his book *The Great Illusion*, also argued that under modern conditions war was simply too costly to wage, that there could be no winners, and that the network of internationally locking investments must prevent its outbreak.

To preach insurrection, however—in contrast to seeing it as a last resort—was ridiculous. “The imbecile crowd,” Lafargue predicted, “would charge itself with seizing and lynching [its] advocates.” But neither would Lafargue accept “standing by with arms crossed.” The French fear of war, which had led to rearming the tsar, possessed propaganda value. If war came, blame could be placed on profit-seeking capitalists, and socialists must ensure that peasants and workers understood this. Here, too, Lafargue parted company with Guesde, who at Limoges in 1906 had warned of the “dangers of exaggerated internationalism.”<sup>32</sup>

In the event of war, then, socialists were to derive every advantage from it, and Lafargue cited as precedents both the “republics of antiquity” that promised freedom and land to slaves who had fought and the revolutionary French government of 1793 that promised national property to volunteers. The proletariat, too, must claim its rightful share of government power. And the agitation that war promoted would prepare workers and peasants for the political and economic expropriation of the propertied classes. Yet all this was academic, as the likelihood of war was remote. Lafargue was still using Marx’s words, still repeating rote formulas, but not offering any real analysis to direct a proletarian struggle in a new situation. His intervention in Nancy was wholly in character, but his views failed to win much support.<sup>33</sup>

As in 1866, when he was a pacifist student, Lafargue had wholly underestimated the impact of nationalism and still failed to probe the mindset of the average worker. (Yet in 1871 Marx had shown that the proletarian attitude toward war could not be assumed as one of hostility but would be shaped by the nature of the war being fought.)<sup>34</sup> Once

again, Lafargue dismissed the alleged patriotism of both proletarians and the bourgeoisie. Rigorously logical, he continued to believe that the rulers of capitalism would never act in a manner so contrary to their self-interest as to permit a European-wide war. Regardless of the mounting tension engendered by repeated foreign crises and the response of a "national revival" in France, his internationalism held firm: in his last public speech, to the SFIO's administrative council late in 1911, he decried Italian socialist deputies who sought public acclaim by widely supporting their country's war against Turkey.<sup>35</sup>

Thus it was differences over strategy that yet once again separated Lafargue from Guesde. For the latter, working-class emancipation issued from the electoral struggle and indoctrination that furthered class consciousness. "At present," Guesde told the Limoges Congress, "all revolutionary action lies in our propaganda and our recruitment."<sup>36</sup> Like Guesde, Lafargue welcomed the creation of the Russian Duma but remained one of the few Guesdists to place emphasis on the general strike. In 1909 he was still complaining that reliance on propaganda had yielded meager results. In the debates over the links to be forged between workers' economic and political organizations, Lafargue's comments reveal how favorable he was to the general strike: "The workers' movement is a new concept," he had said at Limoges, and "the general strike is its weapon."<sup>37</sup>

Could compromise once more have been reached between the two former Parti Ouvrier chiefs? Certainly Lafargue agreed with Guesde on the need for closer affiliation between the SFIO and the CGT, and on achieving it, in part, by bringing socialists into the unions.<sup>38</sup> A totally independent nonpolitical trade unionism could not endure, and "an alliance between the CGT and the Socialist Party [was] inevitable. The leaders of the CGT have not understood this necessity clearly," but, he predicted, "they will." He agreed, too, that the general strike alone could not transform property relationships, and he cited the example of British trade unionists, who "have learned that economic battles are not everything" and so reentered the political arena.<sup>39</sup> Even so, his willingness to allow greater independence to syndicalism and a greater role for economic action drove him from Guesde and drew him to the majority Jaurèssist position. Lafargue's insistence on placing an absolute priority on the preservation of unity within the Socialist Party would place him within the Jaurèssist camp.

## 18 One Reform on Top of Another

“Paul is a candidate in the first constituency of the XIIth arrondissement against the formidable Alexandre Millerand, the *arriviste arrivé par excellence*,” Laura wrote to Luise Kautsky in December 1905, and she predicted “a bitter campaign.”<sup>1</sup> And at a rally held three days later, the Socialist Party formally presented Lafargue’s candidacy.

Millerand had represented the Bercy and Quinze-Vingts districts in southeast Paris since 1889. With few exceptions, they contained drab and lifeless neighborhoods, the monotony relieved neither by parks nor by slums. The landmarks at the turn of the century included the furniture shops on the rue Faubourg Saint-Antoine, the Gare de Lyon, and the warehouses (*entrepôts*) of wine along the Seine at Bercy. Millerand defended the interests of the wine distributors and merchants in the area; the services he rendered to his constituents and the extensive immigration into Paris in general and into the arrondissement in particular enabled his powerful electoral committee to approximate an American political machine.<sup>2</sup> Lafargue knew he faced an impossible task.

Nor was Lafargue’s campaign made any easier by Millerand’s gyrations first toward and then, even before his expulsion in 1904, away from Marxist socialism. The constituency grew accustomed to its candidate and literally shrugged off questions about his political evolution; it was, after all, “still Millerand.”<sup>3</sup> In 1906 he had not yet associated himself with the forces of conservatism; Millerand was literally an “independent socialist” and identified himself as such. It is likely that the SFIO held no hopes of defeating him but wanted a forum to make its case. The *commissaire* of police in the constituency predicted that Lafargue had “no chance of success,” and Lafargue himself was to have said that he entered the campaign only to contest Millerand and that if the latter withdrew he would also.<sup>4</sup>

Lafargue’s campaign rallies were poorly attended. On February 24, at a gathering sponsored by a social studies group at 182 rue de Char-

enton, only fifty people heard Jean Allemane, who praised Lafargue, and the candidate himself, who attacked Millerand for having betrayed the party. In spite of their personal estrangement and political differences, Charles Longuet also came out in support of his brother-in-law, but attendance at rallies remained low. Millerand, on the other hand, drew audiences of several hundred. Campaign posters stating that socialists in the district supported Lafargue against “the renegade Millerand” and praising his lifelong loyalty to the socialist cause made little impact.<sup>5</sup>

Lafargue’s speeches consisted of antibourgeois tirades. Despite their current liberal stand, he charged, the bourgeois would always work to oppress labor, and as evidence he described how those responsible for an antimilitarist poster were indicted for sedition. He attacked Millerand for his betrayal of socialist principles, an example being the latter’s sponsorship of a government-run workers’ retirement plan. For Lafargue, this amounted to “a vast swindle,” inasmuch as the contributions required of workers served to finance the capitalist state and most premium payers would die before becoming eligible for benefits; hence it was “a pension for the dead,” and his campaign posters highlighted Millerand’s refusal to debate him on the proposed pension bill.<sup>6</sup>

Lafargue may have hoped that Radical voters would show their dissatisfaction with Millerand for having denounced the anticlericalism of the Combes government.<sup>7</sup> But the former minister conciliated moderate republicans, who in any case would not have supported Lafargue; and, as the Paris police anticipated, Millerand won the support of most workers in the district, thanks to his long attempts to improve their conditions and increase their salaries, attempts made as both minister and deputy. Lafargue did not survive the first ballot, winning only half as many votes as Millerand.<sup>8</sup>

The Radical government installed after the election of 1906, that headed by Georges Clemenceau and including former socialist Briand and “republican socialist” (more moderate than, and not affiliated with, the SFIO) Viviani, failed to live up to its promise of providing Frenchmen with social justice. In the view of its opponents, it behaved as an ardent champion of private property, and when confronted by a wave of labor troubles, it pursued an active policy of repressing strikes, arresting union officials, and placing greater reliance than ever on police informers to upset union plans. Disgusted by the government’s reliance on troops to protect strikebreakers and dismayed by

the growing reformism of his own party, Lafargue could scarcely contain his frustration with all forms of parliamentary activity. When the police fired on demonstrators during a strike in Draveil itself, his exasperation exploded into fury.

Having made it clear that he was now “on the other side of the barricades,” Clemenceau was preoccupied with foreign and military questions. It is also true that his view of human nature had become increasingly pessimistic; or perhaps a basic conservatism had been hidden by a fiery temperament. Still, he and his party spoke for a majority of Frenchmen, of small bourgeois and peasant proprietors who did not care to pay for expensive social reforms. Hence his government had advised patience to winegrowers requesting government aid against overproduction and limits on imports from Italy and Africa, and had sent troops and arrested leaders of mass demonstrations in 1907.<sup>9</sup>

Low wages and difficult working conditions led the Draveil quarry (sandpit) workers to walk off their jobs on May 2, 1908. The strike spread to the neighboring towns of Vigneux and Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, and the resulting lack of building material brought Paris subway construction to a halt. The subprefect tried to bring the two sides together, but employers refused to negotiate with the new union and brought in strikebreakers. Eager to profit from what it considered a class confrontation, the CGT sent recruiters to the scene.<sup>10</sup> After a month of demonstrations, an outburst of scuffling and rock throwing led the police to shoot into a crowd of demonstrators, leaving two dead and ten wounded.<sup>11</sup>

While a government-sponsored committee of investigation gathered evidence to assess the blame, disgruntled workers continued to demonstrate on almost a daily basis. Swarms of workers and their families insulted bourgeois-appearing passersby and forced them to contribute to a strike fund. Hervé's newspaper exhorted the strikers to counter violence with violence of their own, and the CGT considered calling a twenty-four-hour general strike. On June 11, Clemenceau told the Chamber of Deputies that he deplored the deaths, but insisted they had been provoked and gave the impression of looking forward to another clash. A parliamentary committee of investigation then exonerated the police commander, and government repression was stepped up.<sup>12</sup>

On July 30, four thousand Paris workers took trains to Draveil, where they were met by police, gendarmes, and soldiers, including

cavalry, who tried to keep the crowds moving. Barricades went up at nearby Villeneuve-Saint-Georges. Again, stones were thrown, shots were heard, and the order to fire was given. One person was killed. The troop commander ordered escape routes closed, and the demonstrators were forced into the railroad station, where they were left with no alternatives but surrender or renewed violence. By the day's end, four were dead and between sixty and one hundred wounded. The conservative press called for strict punishment of the organizers. Although not responsible, CGT leaders were ordered arrested by a government eager to cripple the labor federation. (Aware, however, that it had no case against them and to head off a parliamentary bill of amnesty, the government proposed one of its own the following February.)

The shootings sparked a fierce debate between reformists and revolutionaries at the SFIO's Toulouse Congress, held in early October. The gloom at the outset was pervasive. In power for two years, the Clemenceau government seemed wholly secure. Three socialist deputies (from the Gard Department) had quit the party when pressed for payment of dues, and several others had violated party discipline by attending a banquet honoring Briand. Brousse had been expelled by the same revolutionary Seine Federation that had expelled Millerand. A malaise seemed to have settled over the socialist movement, and most saw the question of strategy as needing reformulation. To draft a resolution most delegates could accept, the SFIO's executive had designated a committee composed of both moderates and radicals, Lafargue included among the latter. The two points of view expressed, however, could not be reconciled, and both came before the Congress.<sup>13</sup>

Defending the reformist view was Alexandre Varenne, a socialist deputy and disciple of Jaurès. He questioned the effectiveness of the direct action called for by revolutionaries. Who would undertake it? he asked. Workers who regularly voted for their employers? Was the general strike the answer? With only one union member for every twenty workers? Insurrection? With only fifty thousand organized socialists in the country? Therein lay the reality. Hence the need for joint action with Radicals and for "republican discipline."<sup>14</sup>

Criticism of this position came not so much from Guesde and his followers, who acknowledged these truths, but from Lafargue, who seemed to speak for an anarcho-syndicalist tendency. He did so despite a controversy between himself and the CGT secretary, Emile Pouget.

The founder of three anarchist and syndicalist newspapers and a sworn enemy of all forms of political organization, even those composed of workers, Pouget reminded the readers of his weekly *L'Action directe* of Lafargue's anti-Bakuninist struggle in Spain thirty years earlier and the latter's publication of the names of anarchist leaders. Lafargue defended himself in the pages of *Le Socialiste* by pointing to the conspiratorial nature of the secret Bakuninist Alianza and to his own denunciation by its spokesman, Tomás Moraga.<sup>15</sup>

Before the assembled delegates, Lafargue placed blame for socialism's overall lack of success on the deleterious influence of parliamentarianism—the form of government, he said, appropriate to the bourgeoisie—and asked socialists to condemn it out of hand. The deputy who claims to be the representative of his voters lies, because his electorate is composed both of bourgeois and workers. He cannot represent the one and the other, and so members of the Chamber must always show disloyalty to some constituents. Yet like Jaurès, who acknowledged the importance of syndicalist strikes but could not embrace insurrection devoid of widespread popular support—including that of the military—Lafargue refused any formal affiliation with revolutionary syndicalists, with men like Lagardelle, Ernest Lafont, and André Morizet, who saw no alternative to the general strike and insurrection. He also rejected the anarchist dismissal of reform as “a replastering process designed to prolong the existence of present-day society.” In the long debates that followed, no fewer than twenty-four speakers took the floor. Jaurès again acknowledged the legitimacy of syndicalist action, even the general strike as an ultimate weapon, and proposed the compromise ultimately accepted by both sides: that “precisely because it was a revolutionary party, the socialist party is the party most basically committed to reform.”<sup>16</sup>

Lafargue thus battled against parliamentarianism and the belief that successive reforms could lead to socialism. He could not accept the total rejection of legislative action demanded by antiparliamentarians, and took pride, he said, in his forty years of consistently defending both parliamentary and extraparlimentary action. But although popularly elected legislatures constituted an improvement over monarchy, and the reforms they enacted could make life under capitalism more bearable, he insisted on the class nature of parliamentary democracy. If it was tactically correct to elect socialist deputies, piecemeal reform could not weaken capitalism or lead to the implantation of collectivist ownership. Both the United States and Great Britain en-

joyed the day of weekly rest—as had France before the Revolution—and neither had produced a socialist society.<sup>17</sup>

Once more Lafargue repudiated any return to a policy of cooperation with other left-wing parties: the Millerand case had shown the futility of such a policy, while events in Russia had demonstrated the validity of a revolutionary alternative. The establishment of a parliamentary majority should not be confused with the taking of power. Sending representatives to the Chamber would not limit the forces of government resistance to socialism. Clemenceau and capitalist reaction were stronger than when only three or four socialist deputies sat in parliament. Socialist deputies were elected “not in hopes of diminishing the oppressive force of the capitalist state, but of combatting it,” of procuring a new, “magnificent” battlefield.<sup>18</sup>

Lafargue’s theme was clear: “As Jaurès has said, one reform on top of another will not achieve socialism. As long as capitalism is not undermined at the base, we believe the dominant power of capital cannot be restrained.” Thus he defended the Marxist critique of wage earning that “neither reforms nor goodwill could overcome . . . a comfortable prison was still a prison”; and a happy worker was still a worker, that is, a wage earner who still needed to sell his labor to live. It was the wage system itself that had to be brought to an end.<sup>19</sup> But although Lafargue drew back from affiliation with insurrectionalists and questioned the emphasis they placed on violence, he could not repudiate them as had Guesde, and he again defended the CGT against Guesde’s attempts to subject the labor federation to the newly unified party.

Finally, a resolution of synthesis and reconciliation, which despite its revolutionary rhetoric left a place for electoral and parliamentary action, was approved one vote shy of unanimity. This was the resolution proposed by Jaurès and defended by Lafargue, Bracke, and Vailant, who collectively lent the sanction of revolutionary tradition to Jaurès’s compromises. It held the SFIO as “a party of the working class and of social revolution” whose goal was “the destruction of the capitalist regime and the suppression of classes.” The party kept in sight “the ultimate recourse to insurrectionary force [but] leads the working class on a day to day effort of continual action to improve the conditions of life, work, and struggle.”<sup>20</sup> The resolution thus offered a three-pronged approach: the ultimate goal of the revolutionary establishment of a collectivist society; the recognition that the general strike and insurrection required truly exceptional circumstances; and the



immediate reliance on a parliamentary strategy to enact desired reforms. This proposed course of action would guide the Socialist Party for the next seventy-five years.

Bracke later recalled the militancy Lafargue had shown when he “rubbed shoulders” with the antimilitarists of the revolutionary Seine Federation and supported the general strike, which he understood more “in the manner of a Rosa Luxemburg than of the CGT,” that is, as a mass political strike. In describing Lafargue as “*l’ami de toutes les audaces*,” Bracke could not help but believe that “he combined in his person the love and the taste for adventure.”<sup>21</sup>

The question of electoral tactics understandably preoccupied the following year’s National Congress, which took place at Saint-Etienne in mid-April 1909. Clemenceau’s Radicals had shown an interest in seeking greater accord, but Guesde let it be known that he opposed receiving “communiqués” from the “enemy,” and Lafargue approved his old colleague’s choice of words.<sup>22</sup> As we saw, at the 1907 Congress only Lafargue had supported Hervé in rejecting cooperation with other parties on the runoff vote. In 1908 he had opposed any suggestion that the party return to a left-wing parliamentary union: he had fought the proposal of the independent socialist J.-L. Breton that the SFIO automatically defer to the Radicals on the runoff vote. Any such decision, Lafargue argued, should be taken on a case-by-case basis.<sup>23</sup>

However, the Saint-Etienne Congress voted that in the event a socialist candidate could not expect to win on the second ballot he was to throw his support to the leading republican candidate, provided that candidate was fighting “a reactionary.” Lafargue doubtless saw this vote as a retreat from the strategy approved by the 1905 Congress, which had required the party to run candidates in as many districts as possible on the first vote but which allowed departmental federations to freely decide whether to enter into pacts on the second.<sup>24</sup> That socialists were now required to yield to nonsocialists and that a congress should concern itself largely with electoral tactics rather than with labor concerns strengthened tendencies—and not only those of Lafargue—toward a more militant syndicalism. SFIO membership began to decline in industrial areas (although it held its own or grew in agrarian regions). Because of his outspoken opposition to electoral alliances, Lafargue was finding himself isolated. When delegates to the 1911 Saint-Quentin Congress voted to permit departmental federations to ally with bourgeois parties should local circumstances render this tactic “necessary and useful,” he must have experienced a sense of

betrayal.<sup>25</sup> Only in regard to agrarian policy did Lafargue still find himself in the mainstream of his party. He never minimized the need, in a country like France, to retain peasant support and not frighten it away with talk of future expropriation by socialists; and he could not help but note, as Compère-Morel—who reported on agrarian policy for the party—had shown, that small farmers were being won over to socialism.<sup>26</sup>

Sometime in the summer of either 1910 or 1911, two visitors approached the house in Draveil; it proved to be a second visit by Lenin and Krupskaya. Lenin recalled the meeting in 1895 and how warmly he had been received by the Lafargues, who spoke of the situation in Russian socialism.<sup>27</sup>

We have seen how through the years Lafargue maintained ties with foreign socialists and how his interest in Russian socialism never flagged. Nor had his willingness to receive Russian émigrés ever abated. He took pleasure in Plekhanov's and Vera Zasulich's translation of the *Communist Manifesto* in 1882 and in the subsequent rallying of some Russian socialists to Marxism. Lavrov, the populist who favored the gradual education of the masses to an understanding of the moral aspect of revolution, was a frequent visitor before his death in 1900.<sup>28</sup>

Lenin, of course, had closely followed the Russian Revolution of 1905 and had enrolled himself in a committee of support—the Society of Friends of the Russian People. Lafargue's proposed resolution hailing the revolution in Russia on the opening day of the SFIO's 1905 Congress has already been noted. His present insistence on the need for antimilitarist propaganda had strengthened his ties to the Russian revolutionary movement, and he was publishing articles in its press.<sup>29</sup>

During the repression that followed the Revolution, Lenin had been forced once again to continue the life of an émigré. In the autumn of 1909, he and Krupskaya moved to Paris, where he spent the most difficult years of his exile. In 1910 the forty-year-old Lenin and his wife were living in the quiet rue Marie Rose, not far from the rue d'Alésia on the Left Bank. He followed a strict regimen, bicycling to the Bibliothèque Nationale every morning and returning at two in the afternoon to write for the remainder of the day.<sup>30</sup> He had decided to renew his acquaintance with Lafargue, whom he had met fifteen years before.

So it was that the two shabbily dressed Russians bicycled to Draveil from Paris. Lenin found that Lafargue had scarcely aged since their

last meeting. The two men discussed philosophy, probably in the study, under the portraits of Marx and Engels, and Lenin was struck by the “force of his [host’s] revolutionary temperament.” The Russian doubtless appreciated Lafargue’s opposition to the revival of Kantian idealism then underway but failed to understand the French party’s refusal to get involved in the great labor struggles of the epoch. Lenin found it “monstrous” that the SFIO had remained aloof in the postal, telephone, and telegraph strike of 1909 and the railroad workers’ strike the following year. He had few if any contacts with Western socialist leaders; and one of the few he had was with Lafargue. Certainly Lenin felt closer to Lafargue than to other French socialists because of what he perceived as Lafargue’s revolutionary intransigence as well as his interest in theoretical questions. Lenin had not asked to see Guesde, despite the apparent similarities in doctrine; he believed the latter had reached that “sickness of infantile leftism,” which he later denounced.<sup>31</sup>

Later Laura and Krupskaya walked in the park adjacent to the house, and the two considered the role of women in the Russian revolutionary movement. Krupskaya recalled with emotion her talk with Marx’s last living offspring: “I was very excited—here was after all the daughter of Marx who was before me; I looked at her intently, instinctively I sought in her features those of her father.” Krupskaya also recalled Laura’s enigmatic words: “‘He will soon prove,’ she later said referring to Paul, ‘how sincere he is in his philosophical convictions,’ and at that point the couple exchanged a look which struck me as bizarre.” A year later Krupskaya was to understand the reference.<sup>32</sup>

The two men had much to talk about. Lenin had recently completed his polemic, *Materialism and Empiro-criticism*, and according to Krupskaya he particularly appreciated Lafargue’s materialism. In his book, Lenin set out to defend orthodox Marxism against every kind of modification and revision, from ministerial participation—viewed as the chief threat to socialist success—on the practical plane to the idealistic “intrusions” accepted by those who persisted in identifying themselves as materialists.<sup>33</sup>

On the level of theory, Lenin believed that “materialism generally recognizes the objectively real being [matter] as existing independently of mind, sensation, experience. You cannot eliminate even one basic assumption,” he said, “one substantial part of this philosophy of Marxism”; “it is as if it were a solid block of steel without abandoning objective truth, without falling into the arms of the bourgeois-

reactionary falsehood.”<sup>34</sup> Lenin’s plea for a rational and experimental approach to nature and society—however much he deviated from it himself by dogmatically holding Marx and Engels as supreme authorities—must have struck a responsive chord in Lafargue. He could only have applauded Lenin’s refusal “to let that flickering flame [of man’s intelligence] be blown out by mystics and metaphysicians”; and he could only have welcomed Lenin’s insistence that the importance of his philosophical work lay in its political context, that the revolutionary movement required a clear-cut *weltanschauung*.<sup>35</sup>

Lafargue saw their similarity of views as especially striking because at that moment he was working on an abstruse philosophical article on epistemology, which he published in 1910. Briefly, after exploring earlier replies to questions about the sources of knowledge, ranging from those of Greek Sophists to British sensationalists, Lafargue rejected the Sophists—and their disciples—who denied that objectivity could be attained. Physical science was possible because scientists did not analyze the sensations themselves; they rather noted and classified them to deduce their theoretical and practical consequences. Because the sensations were more or less true and valuable for all, they made objectivity possible.<sup>36</sup>

Back in the practical realm, Lafargue was to suffer a major—and particularly galling—defeat. It stemmed from his opposition to the retirement benefits plan that a majority of socialists nevertheless approved and which, in attenuated form, became law in 1910. The opposition was indeed enormous. The bill was condemned by industry as socialist, by syndicalists as weakening class consciousness, and by militant socialists (for example, those at the Parti Ouvrier’s 1901 Congress) as a fraud.<sup>37</sup> Lafargue wrote that the term “pensions” worked a “magic action on workers’ imaginations.” But the age at which benefits were to begin was too high; poorly paid agricultural workers would find their contributions crushing; and he predicted that employers would pay their share by squeezing employees even harder. He called it legal theft, nothing less than “a gigantic Panama.”<sup>38</sup>

Both Millerand’s efforts and Lafargue’s opposition were unremitting. Jaurès supported the bill, and both he and Lafargue wrote dozens of articles defending their respective positions. Lafargue, siding with revolutionary syndicalists, had kept the opposition alive. Enactment of the bill into law, he argued, would enable the government to invest the funds gathered and use the interest earned to reduce its debts and support militarist and imperialist programs. Disgusted with the pro-

posals to have workers contribute part of their already pitiful wages, he contrarily demanded that their payments be covered by employers. Few workers, he again pointed out, reached the proposed retirement age, only eight percent of the working force was over sixty, and of those only forty percent were still working at sixty-five. Lafargue suggested that eligibility begin at fifty or even forty-five.<sup>39</sup>

Socialism would be better served by introducing a bill of its own, one that provided benefits for unemployment and sickness as well as for old age and disability. The Socialist Party, he asserted early in 1910, must vote against the present bill, then before the Senate, and in its opposition it must join with the CGT and Hervé in widespread agitation throughout the country. (Guesde, who had shown signs of giving in, was urged by Lafargue to oppose the bill, and ultimately did so.)<sup>40</sup> Socialists, then, disagreed over the action socialist legislators should take: Were they to vote? Or were they to abstain? And if the former, how? The party planned to debate the issue at the SFIO's Nîmes Congress in early February.

Although many Guesdists were opposed in principle because the bill required contributions by workers, a Nord departmental congress approved and allowed their delegates freedom of action. And if Hervéists and syndicalists resisted, Independents and conciliators such as Jaurès and Vaillant—called “politiques” by their opponents—while recognizing the inadequacies in the measure, denied that industry would benefit and pointed to the need to provide a measure of social security.<sup>41</sup>

Lafargue moderated his opposition; he would, he wrote Guesde, support the measure only if it exempted employees from payment. To Bracke, he expressed fear that Guesde and his friends would now support the bill to deny Radicals ammunition in forthcoming elections, for Lafargue a “deplorable manoeuvre.” It was better to go on record as standing firm and to combat moderates by denouncing the “fraud” of retirement, and he stated his intention to defend this stand at Nîmes.<sup>42</sup>

Lafargue probably recalled how Engels had favored measures of social legislation to ease working-class distress but had opposed any that would increase the power of the bourgeois state. Speaking for the Guesdists at the Congress—Guesde was ailing and did not attend—Lafargue was unrelenting in his opposition. Should the party approve, he argued, workers would hold it responsible for the “new tax,” which would make approval tantamount to a socialist declara-

tion of war against organized labor and the CGT. Unity was necessary, among the party, the unions, and the cooperatives, and would be achieved by the combined opposition of all three. Radicals who refused to tax income in general but did not hesitate to tax workers' wages only supported the bill for political reasons. Responsible for more spilled workers' blood than any other party, they merely wanted to refurbish their tarnished image. In contrast, the English Liberal Party, in promoting its own welfare legislation, had not asked "a sou" from workers. Could anyone believe, Lafargue asked, that the capitalist state, once awarded these funds, would spend them on unprofitable public works?

However, when he argued that most workers would not live long enough to collect their benefits, Jaurès questioned his figures and accused him of underestimating life expectancy; it was misleading to include infants, whose mortality was high. Lafargue, in turn, quoted British statistics to demonstrate that only a tiny percentage of workers collected retirement benefits in that country: a mere one and a half percent of the population lived beyond the age of seventy, which legitimized the charge that the proposed bill amounted to a new tax on the poor. Lafargue reproached Vaillant for his newfound "parliamentary optimism," for believing that socialists in the legislature would be able to improve the law, once passed, and give workers control over its administration. How could Vaillant believe in these parliamentary solutions and the government's promise not to use the funds collected for its own purposes?<sup>43</sup>

In what had proved to be yet another Lafargue-Jaurès confrontation (Lafargue ruefully acknowledged that his own opposition was "an old story" told by "greyhairs like himself"), Jaurès denied that the contemporary democratic state was homogeneous: "it represented not so much a single class as the present relationship among the classes." Reforms therefore served as building blocks. Humanistic reasons also justified passage of the pension bill, because workers required the security it provided. Filled with emotion, Jaurès spoke of the 120 million francs to be paid to needy retirees and of the protection, however inadequate, available at last to rural workers. Although not perfect, the bill provided real advantages, such as setting aside funds for those currently of retirement age even though they had not contributed. When Lafargue replied that "between two thieves, the capitalist-thief and the state thief, you prefer the latter," an exasperated Jaurès said that he was "too tired to answer and that the Congress would

decide.<sup>44</sup> And the Jaurès-Vaillant defense of the resolution won a vast majority (486 to 30) over the syndicalist-Guesdist coalition, leaving Lafargue almost totally isolated. At the end of March, the Senate approved the bill; but even though—or because—a great majority voted for it, the new law lacked enforcement machinery (and covered only eight percent of the labor force), and employers as well as revolutionary workers hostile to state intervention were able to evade it. (In 1928 a more comprehensive but still inadequate law was voted, which was strengthened by a series of post-World War II enactments.)

Lafargue continued to thunder against the new law in the pages of *L'Humanité*. Not even “monarchist England [or] semi-feudal Germany assess[es] workers . . . only republican France [does],” he wrote repeatedly during 1911.<sup>45</sup> Yet his defeat was inevitable. Once his party decided to participate in elections, it had to propose and defend reforms: this was as true of the POF in the 1890s as of the SFIO after 1905. Among the goals listed in the program drafted for the 1906 election were the eight-hour workday, a progressive income tax, the nationalization of monopolies, proportional representation, and the start of an extensive system of social insurance. Although these reforms were seen as paving the way for the disappearance of the “capitalist edifice of exploitation,” the party’s minimum program resembled that of the Radicals, who, in fact, accused the socialists of stealing it.<sup>46</sup> That the SFIO was regarding itself more as a popular, and less as a proletarian, party was also shown by its decision to give priority to local sections and departmental federations—generally more moderate—and by the party’s inability to cement ties with the world of organized labor.<sup>47</sup> The faction that Lafargue spoke for had been in a state of collapse by 1908 and was burnt out by 1910. The timing of Laura’s letter to Kautsky in the summer of 1910, revealing that she and Paul did not plan to attend the International’s Copenhagen Congress, and another at the end of the year, indicating that the couple would be in Nice, comes as no coincidence.<sup>48</sup>

The second session of the SFIO’s Seventh Congress opened in Paris in mid-July 1910. From Guesde’s standpoint, Lafargue seemed to deviate even more from orthodoxy when he asked for greater socialist understanding of the role of cooperatives and tried to show how the party might profit from such cooperation. Although they were not the breeding place of future society, he said, the cooperatives (particularly producers’ cooperatives), “like the unions provide an example of workers struggling to organize themselves collectively” and so con-

stitute “necessary elements of social transformation.” Lafargue encouraged trade union and Socialist Party representatives to sit on cooperatives’ administrative boards and specifically called for CGT representation both here and in the Socialist Party to link cooperatives, socialists, and syndicalists in “the closest solidarity.”<sup>49</sup> His resolution defeated a more orthodox Marxist proposal (of Haute-Vienne delegates) requiring the Socialist Party and the cooperatives to remain distinct on the grounds that it was “an illusion” to think that cooperatives would hasten working-class emancipation. The only relationship that hard-line Marxists envisaged was one resulting from the infiltration of cooperatives by socialists, and Lafargue’s readiness to admit the desirability of a collaborative approach added to the differences separating him from Guesde.

Lafargue must have believed that his criticism of socialist reliance on parliamentary strategies was fully vindicated by the consequences of the 1910 rail strike, crushed by the Briand government’s decision to mobilize striking workers and subject them to military discipline. The engine drivers, in particular, had been noted for their moderation, skill, and pride; and their craft union had preferred parliamentary solutions to reliance on strikes. Yet these same drivers led the strike in 1910, thoroughly disillusioned by unkept promises of legislative reform and their employers’ decision to respond to legislation reducing working hours by cutting wages and tightening discipline. The drivers had thereupon allied themselves with less skilled workers (in 1912 they were to join the CGT) and so had seen no alternative but to resort to revolutionary syndicalist solutions.<sup>50</sup> But Lafargue’s definitive break with the Guesdists themselves came in the wake of the *Humanité* affair.

In the spring of 1909, the *Sûreté* had received a curious report. Dated April 28, it was entitled “The Guesdists against *L’Humanité*,” and it described the former Parti Ouvrier wing of the SFIO “under the inspiration of Jules Guesde” as contesting the management of the newspaper by Jaurès and Renaudel. Responsible for this renewed hostility was the newspaper’s “compliant” attitude toward the CGT and the Guesdist wish to replace the editors responsible for it. A subsequent report a month later had Guesdists showing continued animosity toward Jaurès. In neither report was Lafargue’s name mentioned, although he was a member of the newspaper’s editorial board.<sup>51</sup>

As a daily, *L’Humanité* had become the most influential party or-



gan, and Lafargue began contributing on a regular basis when the newspaper was opened to all socialist viewpoints shortly after unity. (Each of the three largest factions in the SFIO could publish two articles a week, and the Guesdists chose Lafargue and Bracke as their contributors.) In the eighteen-month period beginning in April 1906, Lafargue published an article almost once a week on a variety of topics. During the following four years, however, there were periods when he published nothing. There were no signed articles between January and June 1908, and articles appeared only irregularly thereafter: in 1909 an eight-article series on rent control; a handful of articles in 1910 and 1911; and his final article in July 1911, characteristically attacking the pension bill.<sup>52</sup>

Similarly, Lafargue contributed only sporadically to the weekly *Le Socialiste*. Guesde started a theoretical paper, *Le Socialisme*, in November 1907, but Lafargue's name was conspicuously missing from the list of editors. The new journal staked out a terrain of class struggle and vowed to avoid all issues extraneous to the taking of political power and the application of a collectivist program. The Paris police speculated that disagreements between Lafargue and Guesde were responsible for the former's absence from the masthead and that Lafargue refused to contribute because he would not subject himself to Guesde's censorship. The loss of Guesdist voting strength and the group's diminishing influence within the SFIO magnified disagreements more easily ignored in times of success. Still outwardly amiable, Guesde continued to visit Draveil, and the police speculated that he hoped to lead Lafargue back to "his lap."<sup>53</sup>

Guesde supported Jaurès's position on electoral alliances and republican defense, although he preferred this be done under Guesdist auspices. But he opposed Jaures's reaching out to syndicalists, and he still hoped to dominate the newly unified party. Lafargue no longer held any such illusions. Hence the considerable opposition by Guesde and his followers to Jaurès over issues of party management and the party press, neither of which they could control. What worsened matters, from their perspective, was Lafargue's willingness to come to Jaures's support at those times when party unity appeared endangered. At the SFIO's Toulouse Congress of 1908, Lafargue, to warm applause, warned the delegates never to forget "that the ideas and tactics of the party are not the work of individuals but of the entire party, which deliberately formulated them at its national congresses and at international congresses . . . [and that] French socialism is only a section of

the Workers International.” While insisting that priority be placed on revolution, Lafargue admitted that diverse socialist tendencies would have to be tolerated. He only questioned Jaures’s socialist credentials when he believed that proposed reforms (for example, the pension bill) might strengthen the capitalist state and threaten closer ties with the trade unions. Yet Lafargue had not openly severed ties with his old Parti Ouvrier colleagues; he had simply kept to himself as much as possible. As Charles Bonnier noted, on those occasions he preferred to “plant his cabbages.”<sup>54</sup>

In short, with extremists favoring reform on their right and insurrectionists on their left, the Guesdists found themselves in an ambiguous position. The loss of Vaillant and his friends to Jaurès completed their isolation: they were now a sect within the unified party.<sup>55</sup> And Lafargue appeared as an increasingly ambiguous force within Guesdism: on the one hand critical of parliamentarianism and reform, on the other defending both when party unity was threatened.

It was Lafargue’s loyalty to *L’Humanité* and the unity it represented that definitively separated him from Guesde. While the latter wanted Marxist orthodoxy to govern its editorial policy, there is no sign that Lafargue defended the right of any one group—even the *tendance* he had so long personified—to exercise control. He had tired of incessant factionalism, and his frustration became clear when at the last party congress he was to attend, in early November 1911, he said, “One hears the charge about tendencies. But they cannot be removed. They will not disappear. They come up; they reemerge with every different question.”<sup>56</sup>

Lafargue had actively defended the administration of the newspaper at the Saint-Etienne party congress in 1909. He admitted that *L’Humanité* could show greater revolutionary fervor, but he praised its management’s coverage of such events as the Draveil shootings and justified its need for greater financial support. At the following year’s Nîmes Congress, when calling for tighter links among unions, cooperatives, and party by having each represented on the administration of the other two, Lafargue had cited the example of *L’Humanité*: “On its board, in addition to the four representatives named by the shareholders, there are delegates named by the Socialist Party, the cooperatives and the trade unions . . . a close alliance, in short.”<sup>57</sup>

The question came up again at the SFIO’s Saint-Quentin Congress in April 1911. Lafargue attended after his and Laura’s return from a tour of Italy.<sup>58</sup> A concerted effort, led by the militant Rappoport, to

remove Jaurès from his directing post on the newspaper failed. Even though Lafargue's last article in *L'Humanité* on August 19, 1911, attacked Jaurès (unfairly) for embarking on a well-paid lecture tour in Latin America, Lafargue urged that he be allowed to stay on as political editor. Yes, the newspaper had experienced editorial problems, but they could be solved by adding "new blood" to the staff. And Lafargue proposed two additions, one being Rappoport himself. "You may not admire his eloquence," he told the delegates, "but as a writer he wields one of the finest pens in Paris journalism."<sup>59</sup>

It was Lafargue's second nominee that caused a sensation: the revolutionary Gustave Hervé. Lafargue explained that in response to his query Hervé had promised that in his capacity as editor he would submit to party discipline, withhold his own antiparliamentarian views, and obey the resolutions of national and international congresses. Hervé had accepted these conditions, and different views ought to be represented in a party, for "we are not sheep." On the other hand, to be effective, a newspaper required a single chief. The solution? Lafargue proposed committee representing different views, and Jaurès had agreed to consult with such a committee. The Congress approved these proposals, and Jaurès kept his post as political editor. After this dramatic confrontation between Lafargue and Guesde, observers noted that the two men ignored each other during the remaining days of the Congress.<sup>60</sup>

Marcel Cachin described how after the unity congress of 1905 "Lafargue removed himself, not too subtly, from our group," and in hindsight Cachin admitted that "he [Lafargue] was right to work for socialist unity." Lagardelle agreed that Lafargue, as "the least sectarian of those in his faction," was the "most faithful to the pact of the newly unified party." Marx Dormoy recalled that from a strategic standpoint Lafargue resembled Jaurès in struggling to preserve the integrity of the party and that Laura was "plus Guesdiste" than her husband. In Dormoy's opinion, Lafargue would have been happy to see a Léon Blum "synthesize" the views of Guesde and Jaurès.<sup>61</sup>

The second session of the SFIO's Eighth National Congress—which proved to be Lafargue's last party gathering—opened in Paris in early November 1911. Guesde and his most loyal followers made a final effort to take control of the party apparatus. Guesde's proposed resolution called for a major change in party statutes regarding the power and makeup of its governance. To assure his own presence, Guesde urged that eleven socialist members of parliament (including himself)

be admitted to the executive council, which would meet regularly between congresses and manage party business, and that this revamped executive council appoint the editors of *L'Humanité*.

Lafargue then spoke. He repeated that factionalism within the party would persist regardless of any restructuring. Nor would reorganizing its executive committee end disagreements between trade unionists and socialists. His shocked audience heard him say that he was going to reject Guesde's proposal. "I am going to separate myself from my comrades with whom I have struggled for twenty-five or thirty years," he said. "I am going to fight their counter-proposal. I find that the [Council] has all the powers it needs to lead." And with Vaillant's help, he succeeded in defeating Guesde's resolution.

Why had Lafargue done this? To the applauding delegates he explained that others "accuse me of representing a trend [*tendance*] other than theirs. They are right; but before representing a *tendance*, I am a member of the socialist party."<sup>62</sup> The *Sûreté* observer present acknowledged that the Jaurèssist victory was made possible by Vaillant's intervention, "but above all by that of Paul Lafargue, who although a well-known Guesdist, asked for the maintenance of the status quo with an eloquent insistence that won over the Congress." Thanks to his intervention, the Guesdist Federation of the Nord abstained, making victory possible.<sup>63</sup>

As Claude Willard pointed out, both Guesde's intransigence and the inability of the party to achieve its stated goals had worsened relations between the leaders and the rank and file.<sup>64</sup> Relations between the leaders themselves, between Lafargue and Guesde, were bound to suffer, and they found themselves on opposing sides in the debate over control of *L'Humanité* and revision of the party statutes. Regardless of his ideological and strategic differences with Jaurès, Lafargue supported him and opposed Guesde on both counts to maintain the unity he had so long worked for. Now, no longer associated with Guesdists but unwilling or unable to affiliate with Jaurèssists, he was isolated and in danger of becoming irrelevant.

## 19 Simply . . . Logical

In late February 1911, Paul and Laura embarked on another tour of Italy and southern France. By the end of the month, they had left Rome and arrived in Naples, where they would spend ten days and visit the famous Blue Grotto before returning home by way of Genoa, Nice, and Marseilles.<sup>1</sup> In early November, the couple attended the SFIO's Paris Congress, where the aforementioned revision of party rules was debated. Lafargue was designated to give the closing speech. White-haired, robust, and handsome, he attracted attention, particularly from newcomers, who noted that he seemed as alert, cheerful, and combative as ever.<sup>2</sup> They of course knew that he was approaching his seventieth birthday (next January 15) and had spent fifty years of his life as a revolutionary. Still, they could not have dreamed this appearance would be his last and that he had carefully, even methodically, conceived, prepared, and organized his death.

The Lafargues spent Saturday evening, November 25, in Paris, where they had dinner and went to the cinema. After returning home, they chatted with their gardener and friend, Ernest Doucet, and his family, and spoke gaily of their day, even commenting on the tart taken for dessert and showing themselves "content and happy."<sup>3</sup> Yet they were fully aware that they would be dead within hours.

About ten the next morning, Doucet was concerned at not seeing them about. He knocked on their door and, getting no response, opened it. He saw Paul stretched out on the bed, fully clothed, and dead. In the next room (separated by a bath), in an armchair, Laura was also dead. Both rooms were neat and in good order. Later Doucet said that if not for their pallid complexion he would have thought they were asleep. The arrangements for what proved to be a joint suicide had been carried out with minute care and wholly surreptitiously, according to the account given by Bracke. There had been no change in their habits and no signs of depression, which explains some of the "anger, almost bitterness" of friends overwhelmed by the news.<sup>4</sup>

The poison injected was potassium cyanide. Lafargue had pur-

chased ampoules from Beauchard, the secretary of the SFIO's Seine Federation, a pharmacist who worked at the Chemist Berthelot.<sup>5</sup> As a doctor of medicine, Lafargue was aware of the nature of the poison and had said he wanted to use it on his birds. He knew that cyanide acted more quickly than other poisons and that death could occur within fifteen minutes of a dose of 200 milligrams. Cyanide begins at once to destroy the enzymes in the blood that enable the tissues to use the oxygen carried by it; the victim is in fact suffocated. The heart begins to beat rapidly and go out of control; headache, drowsiness, and plummeting blood pressure quickly follows; then come convulsions, and very soon, coma and death.<sup>6</sup>

Twenty-one years previously Lafargue had told Engels how impressed he was with the new "hypodermic injection" procedure, "the most important medical discovery ever made," one that would "revolutionize therapeutics altogether." He had cited Koch (who had wanted to use inoculation not to kill bacilli but to make tissue disease-resistant) and had predicted that "it will soon be fashionable to administer medication not through the stomach, but through the skin or the blood stream."<sup>7</sup>

Three envelopes lay nearby, each addressed by Lafargue to his nephew Dr. Edgar Longuet. One contained a suicide note; another, a will; and the third, the telegram that was to be sent to Dr. Longuet. The note was dated November 18, the testament, September 28, both dates showing clear premeditation. The extent of the meticulous preparation was revealed by the telegram announcing the deaths and asking the doctor to come: Lafargue had written the draft, signed the gardener's name to it, and left a message on the envelope asking Doucet to deliver it.

Lafargue's note, giving the reasons for taking his life, read as follows:<sup>8</sup>

Sound of mind and body, I am killing myself before pitiless old age, which gradually deprives me one by one of the pleasures and joys of existence and saps my physical and intellectual strength, paralyzes my energy, breaks my will, and turns me into a burden to myself and to others.

A number of years ago I promised myself not to live beyond the age of seventy; I have fixed the time of year for my departure from life and I have prepared the method of carrying out my resolution: a hypodermic injection of hydrocyanide acid.

I die with the supreme joy of having the certitude that in the near

future, the cause to which I have devoted myself for forty-five years will triumph.

Long live Communism! Long live the Socialist International!

The note to the gardener, in addition to asking that Edgar Longuet be notified, asked him to distribute the six hundred francs that were enclosed, as well as the “chickens, ducks, pigeons, and rabbits from the farmyard,” wine from the cellar, and even the pet dog, to people who had worked in and around the house and to their families, including Doucet’s.<sup>9</sup>

No reference to Laura was made in any of the notes, and aside from Krupskaya’s account, she left no indication of her feelings, certainly not of any decision to join her husband. Laura had recently completed her translations of *The Holy Family* and *Theses on Feuerbach*, and in 1909 the French publisher Giard brought out her translation of Marx’s *Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy*, which revealed that like Paul she had lost none of her intellectual skills to old age. When Lafargue decided that the time had come for suicide, one must assume she agreed with the wishes of the man with whom she had lived for forty years. It must be surmised that Lafargue simply wrote in the first person. Yet Alexandre Zévaès, then estranged from Lafargue and not a reliable witness, doubted that Laura was a willing accomplice to the joint suicide. He praised her as a superior woman, who had no airs about her, who could get to the point in a precise way, and whose contacts with London and Engels had won international attention for the POF. She was only sixty-six years old; she left no letter herself; and Lafargue had made no reference to her. Lafargue, Zévaès concluded, had therefore led her to it.<sup>10</sup> Had there been a discussion? Was she resigned to joining her husband as a stoic sacrifice, or perhaps because she preferred not to survive him? There is no way of knowing, but Eduard Bernstein was probably nearer to the mark when he said that precisely because Laura never spoke of it (aside from the hint to Krupskaya), and because the marriage was a harmonious one, we must assume that she agreed to join her husband.<sup>11</sup>

Was there a predisposition toward suicide on Lafargue’s part? Dommanget cited a letter dated August 7, 1866, suggesting that Laura and Marx worried he might kill himself. Was this significant—or simply the frivolous threat of an eager lover fearful of rejection? Behind the bed where he sometimes rested lay a copy of *Plutarch’s Lives*. Lafargue had underlined the detailed description of the suicide of Cato the Younger, described by Plutarch as “an act of bravery.”<sup>12</sup>

As an erudite reader, Lafargue doubtless knew of Montaigne's view of suicide as a "heroic action," proving that the perpetrator reached the highest peak of wisdom, because it implies complete detachment from all life and earthly possessions. And in a note in *The Right to Be Lazy*, Lafargue referred to primitive peoples for whom life "no longer enlivened by combats, feasts, and dances" merits being put to an end "as a show of affection." In the same note, he hailed an old Scandinavian practice of killing one's parents to deliver them from "the sadness of old age." There is evidence, then, that Lafargue considered suicide long in advance. Even so, no one in his and Laura's immediate family, the Longuet children and their children, suspected, and the deaths came as a great shock.<sup>13</sup>

Was the decision speeded by any despair induced by an awareness on the part of the seventy-year-old and his wife of a "nationalist revival" and the realization that to impede it would take more force than they and other socialists possessed? Had Lafargue, as he saw the return to reformism by his party and nationalism by his country, considered himself a failure, *un homme manqué*, as an English acquaintance insisted?<sup>14</sup> He had relied on both the vote and doctrinal purity. Was his faith shaken? In an unsigned obituary in the December 1911 issue of *Le Mouvement socialiste*, the writer pointed to Lafargue's isolated and independent stand, and noted that suicide marked the logical end to his existence.

Regardless of the absence of outward signs of depression, was Lafargue frustrated by events? In 1911 a crisis in the textile industry and mounting unemployment in the Nord produced an anarcho-syndicalist offensive in the form of competing action committees to parallel existing socialist trade unions. They were condemned by Nord socialists; and the Guesdists among them, to what must have been Lafargue's consternation, were determined to purge syndicalists from union ranks. But there is no evidence of either psychological depression or despair on his part. In 1910 many Guesdists and syndicalists had joined forces against the pension bill and would do so again to fight a three-year military service bill. Similarly, there is no evidence that the threats of war, as revealed in crises such as that in Morocco or in Tripoli (the Italian invasion of which prompted the SFIO's request that the International Socialist Bureau meet to discuss this flagrant case of aggression), had an especially distressing effect on Lafargue.<sup>15</sup>

How upset was he by repeated criticisms of his wealth, by the references to "Lafargue the millionaire" who lived outside a socialist tradition? Certainly Lafargue had his defenders, who portrayed him as



generously distributing funds to accused militants, to his party's printing establishment, and to other recipients.<sup>16</sup>

Had incessant party squabbling and factionalism driven him to despair of a socialist future, particularly in the aftermath of the *Humanité* affair? Here a stronger case can be made. According to Sûreté reports filed in the fall of 1911, Guesdists were critical of the newspaper for publishing too much labor news and not enough "socialist" news.<sup>17</sup> At an executive council meeting of October 30, according to an undated report, Lafargue promoted the candidacy of Marius André. André, a dismissed railway worker, specialized in and published on issues affecting railroad workers, and had served on the POF's executive committee and after that the SFIO's, as editor-in-chief. Violently opposed was Pierre Renaudel, now the party's secretary-general, presumably because André was more of a syndicalist than a socialist. Lafargue had to remind Renaudel that there were precedents for syndicalist participation in the party. At one time, he pointed out, Briand had written for *L'Humanité*. Subsequent reports mentioned Lafargue's dissatisfaction with his role in party affairs and the unhappiness of others over his readiness to cooperate with Hervéists.<sup>18</sup> Guesdists wanted the next meeting of the parliamentary socialist group, scheduled for September 6, to formally prohibit any of its members from joining any other Chamber group, a move aimed specifically at the moderate socialist Albert Thomas, a friend of Jaurès. We saw how near the end of October a minority in the party wanted to subject the administration of *L'Humanité* to the SFIO's national congress and how the proposal was defeated by a coalition of Jaurèssists and Hervéists. Similarly, we must recall how in early November, eight days before Lafargue's suicide, Guesde and his friends were again seeking more executive control; how they were again defeated, this time by a Jaurès-Vaillant-Lafargue coalition; and how significant Lafargue's role was in their defeat.<sup>19</sup>

We shall never know to what extent Lafargue's estrangement from his longtime associates in the struggle to implant Marxism contributed to his decision. But he had separated himself from Guesde before, most conspicuously at the times of the Boulanger and Dreyfus affairs, over which strategies to pursue, and there is no reason to believe this final break was paramount. It appears that Lafargue, followed by his wife, decided to take his life for the reasons he gave: because it seemed to him the most rational thing to do in the face of old age and future illness. At the turn of the century, with life expectancy considerably

lower than today and before revolutionary developments in preventive medicine had fully made their appearance, those who chose suicide rather than endure what they saw as the burdens of enfeebled old age (a choice more prevalent among professionals, including doctors and lawyers, than among miners and industrial workers) were not condemned as guilty of crimes. Although much moralized about, suicide, for one student of the subject, was then “only rarely viewed as terrifying or disgusting,” and its victims usually evoked sympathy.<sup>20</sup> For another analyst, “suicide is neither normal nor pathological . . . it is simply, from the subject’s point of view, logical.”<sup>21</sup> The most promising areas of research for suicidologists lay in “how the act of suicide fits into the life style of the individual [since] suicide is an act carried out by a living being and must be expected to fit into his life style . . . for many people it is a way of achieving a better life or avoiding a worse life.”<sup>22</sup> We can therefore take Lafargue’s explanation at face value; it was an act of will that corresponded with the way he chose to live.

The reaction on the part of his colleagues was astonishment, bewilderment, and then anger. On hearing the news, Guesde was at first stupefied, unable to believe it. His friend and biographer, Compère-Morel, found him in a long dressing gown, withered hands crossed, hair and beard tousled, eyes clouded with tears behind his glasses. His face was writhed by choked sobs, and he was crying with mixed pain and anger: “No! No! Impossible! Lafargue hasn’t done that! Lafargue hasn’t left me? It’s not true!”<sup>23</sup> Then in a sequence of confused yet understandable reactions, Guesde saw it as an act of desertion and told Lucien Roland, a Guesdist member of the SFIO’s executive committee and an editor of *Le Socialiste*, not to speak of it. But on Roland’s reminding him of Lafargue’s long service to the movement, a weeping Guesde reconsidered. Despite their many disagreements, Guesde still believed himself close to Lafargue. When not too long before he had visited Draveil for a few days, the occasion amounted to “a fête.” Laura, in many ways more of a Guesdist than her husband, had shown herself most attentive to the visitor.<sup>24</sup>

Vaillant was more sympathetic, even initially. Lafargue was not a deserter: the suicide was not an act of cowardice inasmuch as it revealed Lafargue “in full control of himself,” as showing “energetic resolution, faithful to the dictates of his conscience.”<sup>25</sup> But others were thunderstruck, especially as Lafargue seemed so entirely healthy. A few months earlier, a visitor to Draveil noted that “he was straight as an oak and as nimble as a young man.” This was confirmed by Marcel

Sembarat, who found the Lafargues “in full vigor,” and by others who had seen Lafargue at the SFIO Party Congress at the beginning of November and who later remarked that he was in full possession of his faculties.<sup>26</sup>

Lafargue’s last campaign, waged in speeches and in the columns of *Le Socialiste* in the months before his death, took aim at *la vie chère*, at rising inflation. Lafargue blamed “M. Vautour” (Mr. Vulture), the arch-speculator, and his criticisms matched in intensity if not duration those directed against ministerialism a decade earlier. This intellectual vigor also accounted for the widespread surprise at the news of his suicide. Although they could not agree with Lafargue’s estimate that he could no longer usefully serve the cause he had so long defended, the editors of *Le Socialiste* closed their obituary with a citation from the conservative *Journal des débats*, which had “unwittingly” paid the supreme tribute: “He has always been the disinterested representative of doctrine who did not give way, at critical moments, to any of the intrigues entered into by politicians.” In what proved to be his last public act, Lafargue had addressed the SFIO’s administrative council on the appropriate response the party should make regarding the question of inflation, and his remarks were published posthumously.<sup>27</sup> Lafargue had proposed suspending tariffs and taxes on food and establishing municipal bakeries, butchers, and dairies—the “municipalization” of commerce first proposed in 1882 and wholly consistent with his efforts to have his party participate in all popular protest movements.

At the Saint-Quentin Congress the previous April, Lafargue had deplored the slow growth in party membership. He again denounced “l’esprit ministerialiste” within the party, in addition to protesting the proposed eviction of Jaurès and the editors of *L’Humanité*.<sup>28</sup> Guesde said that Lafargue was “in full force” and “in better health than many of us.” Recalling his battles on the National Council during the Congress, Sembarat and Vaillant agreed that “he left the party too soon.” The SFIO secretary, Louis Dubreuilh, concurred: “beloved and respected *doyen* . . . [Lafargue] went before his time.”<sup>29</sup> Hence his colleagues dismissed his fear of seeing his strength diminish. A quarter of a century later Bracke was still calling the suicide “a cruel surprise” and regretting that “Lafargue lacked confidence in his friends and companions of struggle.” Louis Aragon’s novel *Les Cloches de Bâle* (*The Bells of Basel*), which re-created the Lafargues’ funeral, respected the memory of one “who gave his entire life to our class and who

never betrayed it." But, Aragon added, "he has not given his death to us. His death has nothing in common with the death of workers."<sup>30</sup>

Jaurès shared in the widespread astonishment. Writing in the party's central organ, he said that however early the decision (to commit suicide) was taken, the news came without warning and that Lafargue, up to the end, was "as passionate and as disconcerting as ever." In death as in life, where he was "a great fighter for socialist unity," he was a mixture of idealism and paradox. Yet his pursuit of that unity made him act in the best interests of the party. If he sometimes left the fold and wounded his friends, he instinctively returned. In death, too, he showed both "stoicism" and a "primitive lack of concern." While his conviction that socialist victory was certain sounded a "beautiful cry of hope," he was wrong in thinking he could no longer be useful: Lafargue "doubted himself too much." Even so, he had earned his rest.<sup>31</sup>

More critical observers placed emphasis on the depletion of funds that threatened the Lafargues' economic well-being. Drumont, who admired the couple, spoke of their "epicurean" style and believed that when Lafargue, the "last idealist of materialism, had disposed of the legacy left by Engels he had decided it was time to end his life." Similarly, Zévaès asserted that Lafargue was only "obeying his egoistical conception of life." Lafargue liked the comfort he had secured thanks to the legacy left by his mother and, a few years after that, by Engels (mistakenly estimated at 160,000 francs, about twenty-five percent more than the actual value), which had permitted the "villa" at Draveil. And Lafargue himself once informed Engels of his work on a draft article showing that suicide, like criminality and mental derangement, was "governed by economic circumstances."<sup>32</sup>

Lafargue's "avarice" was also noted, and he was reputed to be close in money matters. Some within the party called him *le petit épiciier* (the grocer).<sup>33</sup> Yet as Zévaès himself admitted, most people did not know that the Lafargues spent much of their legacy in annuities for deserving socialists; this largesse, however, had brought Paul closer to the end of his resources and had justified fears of deprivation and infirmity. Nor did anyone know, until revealed by his executor Edgar Longuet, that Paul had vowed not to live beyond the age of seventy and had ten years earlier divided his fortune into ten equal parts, one to be spent each year. He had refused to invest it on grounds of principle, an omission deplored by the wealthy Henry Hyndman. For Hyndman, "Lafargue really seems to have prepared poverty quite unnecessarily

for himself and for his wife and did not care to live in it.”<sup>34</sup> Still, many joined Bracke in asking why Lafargue had believed that his comrades would leave him destitute and not provide him with a comfortable old age. Could he not have appreciated, they wondered, what his presence and that of Marx’s only surviving daughter meant for the party? (On the other hand, there was no guarantee he would be provided for; there was no French Engels in sight.)<sup>35</sup>

Lagardelle attributed Lafargue’s suicide to “his materialist faith [which] predominated over his socialist faith; his death demonstrated this to us. His suicide was a ritual sacrifice because his sensualist world had to be singularly rich in appearances . . . inasmuch as he preferred to lose life rather than not be able to enjoy it. In any case, he died with the serenity of a believer who fell for his religion.” Conservative newspapers suggested that “those who live by the sword die by it,” and contrasted Lafargue’s “cowardly action” with the revolutionaries of 1789.<sup>36</sup> One can only conclude that having depleted his funds he was entitled to believe he would be a burden on others.

Foreign socialist reaction was no less divided—and equally bewildered and speculative. Bernstein recalled the sympathy Lafargue had shown in his writings for the patricide committed by primitive peoples in order “to avoid decrepitude” when their elders became “useless.” Highly principled, Lafargue condemned the taking of interest as “usury and refused to invest the remainder of his fortune.” Hence Lafargue “had every right to take his life,” even though he still had duties to perform.<sup>37</sup>

Bebel was indignant. Lafargue was alert, robust, and “in the first rank of his party.” Yet one day, “in the first light of dawn,” he destroys himself and his life companion. Was it stoicism, heroism, or fear of not seeing his dream realized? Kautsky compared him to the heroes of antiquity who killed each other before old age struck, and then spoke of his influence on the socialist movement. Talamini, the Paris editor of the Italian socialist newspaper *Avanti*, also praised Lafargue. At the funeral, the Belgian socialist Edouard Anseele would compare Lafargue’s death to both Delescluze’s and Engels’s, the one on the barricade and the other in bed, and so play down the differences in the ways in which revolutionaries die.<sup>38</sup>

Writing in *Die Neue Zeit*, Mehring said that the suicides contradicted the ideas and principles Lafargue held dear. He described Lafargue as “nonchalant” and as a “non-worrier,” and wondered if his “black blood” was responsible both for his demeanor and for his

decision to take his life. In any event, his place in socialist history as the POF's theorist, in contrast to Guesde's as the agitator, was secure. Regrettably, Lafargue had underestimated the value of a socialist deputy; he had been too individualistic, too independent to sit in parliament. But as a writer, he had given his best to *Die Neue Zeit* for over a decade: like Diderot, to whom Mehring compared him, Lafargue's clear style and fine taste won deserved acclaim.<sup>39</sup>

The American socialist newspaper, *The Daily People*, accepted the given explanation: "He cared not to live after his lamp lacked oil. Jointly, with his companion in life, he bade us all adieu." The newspaper recalled how he looked the part, how, in a crowd, "with his flowing hair, vivacious eyes, sprightly part, athletic suppleness, [Lafargue] would be easily picked out as a bold poetic type, as a child of nature . . ." <sup>40</sup>

Lenin showed conflicting emotions. He had not forgotten his last visit, and according to Krupskaya, the news of the Lafargues' deaths "strongly impressed him." She quoted Lenin as saying, "if one no longer has the strength to work for the party, it is necessary to look at the truth squarely and to know how to die as did the Lafargues." He stated his intention to deliver a eulogy at their funeral, to say their work had not been in vain. Yet according to Serafina Gopner, a member of the Bolshevik group in Paris, at a meeting held after the funeral Lenin said that "a socialist does not belong to himself but to his party. If he can still be useful to the working class, for example to write an article or make an appeal, he has no right to commit suicide."<sup>41</sup>

Writing in 1923, Trotsky found Lafargue's life, but not his death, a model for emulation. Comparing his suicide with Jaurès's assassination three years later, he wrote that "every man dies his own death." Lafargue, "an Epicurean disguised as a Stoic, lived his seventy years in an atmosphere of peace, then decided it was enough and committed suicide. Jaurès, champion of the idea, fell on the field of battle while struggling against the worst scourge of mankind—war. One must remain at his post, for the struggle continues." (Yet seventeen years later, anticipating his own death, Trotsky added a postscript to his testament of February 27, 1940: "I reserve to myself the right of determining the moment of my death.")<sup>42</sup>

Sunday, December 3, the day set for the funeral, was gray and overcast. Rain fell at frequent intervals, leaving pools of water in the streets. The cortege accompanying the couple's remains to the Père Lachaise cemetery was to form in and around Socialist Party head-

quarters at 16 rue de la Corderies—in the Temple district in eastern Paris, one not much visited by tourists.<sup>43</sup>

When Keir Hardie, representing the British Labour Party, arrived at one in the afternoon, he found “a huge crowd” blocking the streets. The facade of number 16 was draped in black, the color worn by most present. Two hearses, each drawn by a pair of black horses, led the procession. As Aragon described it, at the head of the procession a band played Chopin’s “Funeral March,” and above the narrow street, hovering over the black-clothed mourners, was “a sea of red flags . . . like bright flames above the darkness.” Men and women wore red paper roses in their buttonholes and blouses.<sup>44</sup>

Countless wreaths, most of red immortelles, were borne by representatives of different societies and federations; others, walking alongside, carried red flags draped in black. Jean Longuet and his two brothers, representing the family, walked behind the hearses. Then came delegates from other countries: Kautsky and Grumbach for the German Social Democratic Party; Anseele for the Belgian Workers Party; Rubanovitch for the Russian Social Revolutionary Party; Alexandra Kollontai and Lenin for the Russian Social Democratic Party; Otto Pohl for the Austrian Social Democratic Party; Kuradasky for the Polish party, Dickmann for the Argentine party; Fabra Ribas for the Spanish party; and so on. A Russian mourner could not help but note that the English were recognizable at a glance; but he took pride in his fellow Russians, who made up the largest foreign contingent, half the cortege, including the Bolshevik general staff, which revealed both their numbers in Paris and the extent to which Russian socialists had been in touch with Lafargue.<sup>45</sup> The police reported that at a memorial gathering four days before, no fewer than six hundred Russian socialists in Paris paid tribute to Lafargue’s memory. The theme at that assemblage had been struck by Rappoport, who described Lafargue as the greatest propagator of socialist ideas. But the police observer present was more impressed by the beautiful woman sitting in the first row of the large Russian group, whom he identified as “Citizeness Kollontai.”<sup>46</sup>

One evening newspaper, *La Presse*, estimated the crowd following the cortege as approaching twenty thousand, but a police report put the number at less than half that figure. *L’Humanité* had published a map of the route, and reminding workers of Lafargue’s contributions to labor, it urged as many readers as possible to join it. Aragon had expected an even larger showing but found solace in the many

who did come in spite of the rain.<sup>47</sup> Certainly, Lafargue would have been pleased. He had envied Jules Vallès, the former Communard, whose funeral in 1885 had attracted perhaps a hundred thousand, “the finest funeral since Gambetta’s,” and had provided workers with ample opportunity for demonstrations against the bourgeoisie and against the “patriots” who had tried to seize the wreath placed by the German SPD.<sup>48</sup>

The route, which required one and a half hours to walk, followed the rue du Temple, crossed the Place de la République, went along the street of that name, and then traveled down the boulevard de Ménilmontant to the cemetery. Crowds lined both sides of the street, and of course there were people watching from the windows overhead. Tram service had been suspended. Men removed their hats; some women crossed themselves; and even soldiers and police stood at attention, all of which attested to the respect, and for some, almost the reverence, in which the couple was held. Signs held aloft identified sections of the party, provincial organizations, and foreign groups. In spite of the mud and water, the mourners walked in rows of twelve, and before each contingent someone carried either sprays of flowers or a red wreath. This human river stretched between the two lines of silent spectators, while above their heads floated the crimson flags and banners, obscured by the fine drizzle and occasional torrents of rain.<sup>49</sup>

At last the hearses entered the cemetery gates. Aragon’s description is worth repeating. “The Père Lachaise cemetery,” he wrote, “is a strange city in which miniature palaces, interspersed with wretched tombs, recall the bourgeois splendors of the dead. Saint-Sulpice angels stand watch over rolls of honor that read like lists of boards of directors. Bronze bankers, marble ladies, neo-Hellenic chapels, mourners beside broken steles, stone draperies, frozen sobs. Black trees against the grey sky. The procession behind the horses loaded with red everlasting flowers, with its banners . . . on the little gravel paths. The two hearses moved side by side. Then between the tombs there was an onrush, almost a race, of people headed for the columbarium.”<sup>50</sup>

Although the rain fell steadily, the crowd massed before the building, and on its steps the speakers—delegates of the International, socialist deputies and councillors, and family members—delivered their eulogies. Several of them were rendered twice, once in the language of origin, once in French translation. Bracke translated that given by Kautsky; Camélinat did the same for Kier Hardie. Dubreuilh, Kautsky, Anseele, Vaillant, Hardie, Bracke, Rubanovitch, Ghésquière, Lenin,



and others all spoke. Then, according to both the *Humanité* reporter and a police observer present, “a grayish smoke rose from the columbarium, which the wind now beat down like a crepe over the crowd. Suddenly everyone became animated: the flag-bearers raised their red banners; and shouts of applause rang forth; because on the steps of the temple where the bodies of the Lafargues were being cremated, a bearded, heavy-set, pathetic-looking man had just made his appearance . . . [Lafargue’s old antagonist] Jaurès.” According to the account in *L’Humanité*, there was “an impressive passion and intensity about the man . . . and the warm, vibrant voice worked its magic.” Jaurès called Lafargue an idealist, the intellectual heir of the French eighteenth-century philosophes, but made no reference to Marx.<sup>51</sup>

Although he had never before spoken French in public and would never do so again, Lenin had wanted to say at the Lafargues’ tomb that they had not lived in vain. He did not hesitate to relate their work to that of Marx, and predicted that it would someday reach even “distant Asia.” Elsewhere Lenin had described Hervéism as an *ultra gauche* “sickness” and the general strike as advocated by Sorel as “anarchist verbalism.” Although he must have been aware of Lafargue’s sympathy for Hervé, Lenin spoke of Lafargue’s relevance for class-conscious proletarians in Russia, “our Social Democrats . . . who had come to appreciate Lafargue as one of the greatest and most profound propagators of Marxist ideas,” ideas that “delivered powerful blows against absolutism and defended the cause of socialism, of revolution, and of democracy.” If most of the assembled leaders of the International found the speech entirely too radical, they did not then say so.<sup>52</sup> Other speakers followed. Then, according to observers, a rain squall suddenly beat down upon the crowd so violently that people ran for cover. The speaker holding forth, however, remained on the steps of the columbarium, in the midst of black trees, “and an increasingly heavy smoke rose above his head into the torrents that fell from the sky.”<sup>53</sup>

## Afterword

The subsequent disposition of the Lafargues' remains had a macabre history. Unless other arrangements were made, their ashes, put in two urns in the columbarium, were to be kept there only five or six years and then placed in a common grave. The Socialist Party intended to renew the contract, but before that happened the party treasurer, Grandvallet, learned that the order had been given—although not carried out—to remove the urns. But the worker in charge, an old socialist militant, had refused to dispose of them when the concession expired. He had known of the Lafargues, and unable to dispose of their ashes, he put the urns in the toolshed instead. The party subsequently bought space for gravesites in the Père Lachaise cemetery facing the *mur des fédérés*. The ashes were buried there in 1924, later joined by the remains of Jean Longuet and his wife.<sup>1</sup>

Because it was neither signed nor dated, Lafargue's will created some legal and financial problems, requiring that his library be sold soon after his death. And in 1913 the Draveil house itself was sold for 25,000 francs, though worth more than twice that amount.<sup>2</sup>

Little attention was paid to Lafargue's life or works in the quarter century following his death. An exception was the Russian V. Hoffenschefer, who in 1933 published a collection of Lafargue's literary criticism together with an introduction and commentary. He sought to rehabilitate Lafargue, who was still regarded as "un simple vulgarisateur de la doctrine marxiste." In the 1930s, however, the French left, wishing to bring its self-enforced sectarianism to an end and searching for a cultural identity in Marxism, resuscitated Lafargue in various journal articles, two book-length studies, and an anthology of Lafargue's literary criticism. In an important speech at Draveil on June 20, 1937, inaugurating a monument to him, Marcel Cachin paid homage to Lafargue. Georges Stolz, an official of the Fédération Syndicale Internationale, credited Lafargue's "original gift of dialectic thought." G. Varlet also published an uncritical biography, and Jean Freville, in

his analysis of Lafargue's literary criticism, acknowledged the debt owed to Hoffenschefer, whose "enthusiasm and admirable tenacity" marked his dedication to "rehabilitating" Lafargue.<sup>3</sup> The immediate post-World War II success, and then setback in the Cold War, of the two large French Marxist parties elicited another study, that by Jean Bruhat. Still, the writer was more concerned with explaining the failings of French communism than with providing a dispassionate account of Lafargue's life.<sup>4</sup>

Soviet writers have published on Lafargue, but the reception accorded him reflected prevailing political currents. The emphasis he placed on leisure time and his dream of replacing state power with voluntary organizations of producers and workers scarcely squared with Bolshevik directives to increase production, including emulation of the capitalist techniques of rationalization developed by Taylor and Ford embodying the obligation to work. The communist press, particularly in the 1920s, underscored his "errors": the analysis of Boulangism, the underestimation of a European war, the exaggeration of the revolutionary potential of the Commune, and (at the same time) the description of it as a patriotic rather than a proletarian uprising. Compounding all this was his predilection for living like a "bon bourgeois."<sup>5</sup> The Stalinist authorities imposed restrictions on the publication of Lafargue's "hedonistic" Marxism: *The Right to Be Lazy* and other essays were published only in his collected works and in non-committal compilations. The 1953 edition of *The Great Soviet Encyclopedia* stated that "*Lafargue was incapable of recognizing Kautskyism* [emphasis in original]" and that "he took a centrist position on a number of questions." Similarly, in the Soviet satellites and particularly in the German Democratic Republic, Lafargue's praise of leisure could not be published: new editions appeared only in Tito's Yugoslavia, in Gomulka's Poland, and, presumably because of his origins, in Castro's Cuba.<sup>6</sup>

Much of Lafargue's own writings and writings about him were not published in the former Soviet Union until the Khrushchev era.<sup>7</sup> Little if anything emerged during the Brezhnev years, and the revised (1973) edition of the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* only acknowledged his struggle "against any kind of opportunism," making no mention of *The Right to Be Lazy*. Then, beginning in the late 1970s and extending through the Gorbachev years to the present, several publications by and about Lafargue have appeared.<sup>8</sup>

As has been noted, Cubans have shown interest in their nation's most personal link with Marx but, with the exception of one study

of his boyhood education, have limited themselves to publishing anthologies of Lafargue's writings or popularizations of his life. They did this even though Lafargue did not participate in any of the revolutionary movements for a free Cuba at the end of the nineteenth century. Some of his works circulated in Latin America and in Spain after his death; there were several Argentine and Chilean editions. Largely published by anarchists and critical of Lafargue, these works lacked any introductory material. A translation of Lafargue's study of Hugo was published in pre-Castro Cuba.<sup>9</sup>

Even so, aside from *The Right to Be Lazy*, Lafargue is not much read today. He is often caricatured and deformed, above all by the disciples and admirers of Georges Sorel, who see him as the "*fantaisiste* of French Marxism," as possessed of an "incorrigible lightness" and of "great pretension." Like Sorel, they reject "the paradoxes, the gags, the naivetes" they found in Lafargue's works.<sup>10</sup> Other French socialists—particularly intellectuals of the Ecole Normale familiar with German texts, such as Lucien Herr, Charles Andler, and Jaurès—were repelled by what they considered as oversimplifications and sloganeering by the POF and its theoretician. Even the author of the distinctive and lucid *Main Currents of Marxism*, Leszek Kolakowski, calls Lafargue a "hedonist," while other critics see him as a superficial pamphleteer, a simplistic vulgarizer, more interested in polemics than rigor, who "scarcely introduced more than the name of Marx into France—the least that a son-in-law could do."<sup>11</sup> In the Paris directory, there is not a street in his name, although Jaurès, Vaillant, and Guesde are adequately represented. Of the 117 municipalities around Paris, including much of the "red belt," 92 have arteries named after Jaurès, 35 have roads named after Guesde, but only 17 (one-seventh of the total) have streets named after Lafargue.<sup>12</sup>

Although within the Second International Lafargue had been appreciated by Kautsky, Lenin, and others as the best—even the only—French Marxist theoretician, his reputation was questioned during and after his lifetime. Not until the 1970s was there a rebirth of interest by French and foreign writers in the work and personality of Lafargue. Claude Willard's exhaustive study of the Guesdists comments on, without discussing, Lafargue's theoretical accomplishments but does this within the larger context of the party structure. In his introduction to a collection of Lafargue texts, Jacques Girault provided a biographical account that carried the story to 1891, and Maurice Dommanget published a new presentation of *The Right to Be Lazy*. In the dictionary of working-class militants edited by Jean Maitron, there is

an abbreviated account of Lafargue's career. The comprehensive doctoral dissertation by William Cohn surveys Lafargue's life and ideas, while Tivadar Gorilovics's presentation of Lafargue's *Légende de Victor Hugo* rejected the interpretation of Lafargue as a sectarian and credited him as "the first" and until recent times the "only great Marxist critic in France."<sup>13</sup>

There was also interest in Lafargue as literary critic: Willard's article in *Le Mouvement socialiste* (1967); an article by Roger Fayolle in *Philologica Pragensia* (1976); the above-mentioned presentation by Gorilovics; and a Madeleine Rébérioux article in *Le Mouvement socialiste* (1967). But aside from the few lines given to Lafargue by Pierre Moreau in *La Critique littéraire en France* (1967), not until 1977 was there a short chapter on Lafargue and other socialist critics in any history of French literature.<sup>14</sup> This delay came about not only because the Sorelians unceasingly ridiculed Lafargue for his "errors" and "lack of sophistication," but also because the history of socialist literary criticism was not well known. Hoffenschefer's work had been ignored in France. At the time of his death, Lafargue no longer enjoyed his previously held reputation of party theorist. The funeral speeches and articles published, those of Guesde, Jaurès, Bracke, Dormoy, and others, stressed his talent as polemicist and pamphleteer; they admired his dash, but not his ideas.

For his defenders—Willard, Varlet, Bruhat, Grisoni, and Freville—Lafargue doubtless made mistakes, inclined toward dogmatism, and let himself be led by a taste for paradox, for the quip (*boutade*), and by a wish to dazzle. Yet they insist that his audacity stamped him as one of the few, perhaps the only, theorist (certainly the only one in France) who tried to apply in a creative way Marxist analysis to the most diverse ideological, economic, religious, ethical, and esthetic problems.<sup>15</sup>

After his return to France in 1882, Lafargue did much to familiarize the French labor force with Marxism, a labor force that had not yet rejected "Proudhonism" and "Blanquism" and even utopian socialism. In 1885 Engels could write that "even the French edition of *Capital* remains a closed book to workers and not only to them but also to the best educated."<sup>16</sup> Twenty years later this was no longer true, and it is not an exaggeration to say that much of this change issued from Lafargue's propaganda—and from Laura's translations of much of the work of Marx and Engels. The Lafargues were interested above all in making Marxism accessible.

In this quest, Lafargue and the Parti Ouvrier may have reduced Marxism to fundamental schema and almost completely ignored its dialectical view of the world, so complex and foreign to the tradition of French thought. Former POF members were suspicious of unity before it took place, and afterward were all too aware of their position as one of several factions within the SFIO. They were aware, too, of their different (increasingly cliché-ridden) vocabulary, their stiffness, and even their dress (the wide-brimmed hats and large-bowed neckties that some still wore). They felt themselves shoved aside and becoming isolated. They still stressed propaganda, still saw their mission as pedagogical, and still provided cut-and-dried responses to such complex questions as war and peace and socialist-syndicalist relations. Certainly Lafargue's—and the Marxists'—anti-intellectualism (most often directed against intellectuals with whom they disagreed) continued to haunt the French left in the years after 1914 and contributed to the harsh line taken against intellectuals by the Third International.

Yet such second-generation Guesdists as Compère-Morel, the director of the *Encyclopédie socialiste*, a reformist, and a specialist in agricultural matters, and Lucien Roland, who administered the Librairie Socialiste, slowly reconciled themselves to the larger party. And even on the eve of World War I there were some signs of Marxist renewal. Some younger militants had begun to study social structures; Marcel Cachin and Vincent Carlier, inspired by Lafargue, were exploring the mechanism of trusts and other pooling arrangements; the Bourbonnais Pierre Brizon, elected to the 1910 Chamber, pushed for new legislation regulating *métayage*. From the Dordogne and then the Haute-Vienne, Paul Faure defended orthodox Guesdist views. But there was little coherence among the former Guesdists and their heirs, and on the national level their continued aggressiveness threatened to render the movement electorally irrelevant. For both moderate and radical historians of French socialism, this elementary and rigid Marxism inhibited analyses of current French problems and accordingly prevented formulation of relevant strategies to solve them.<sup>17</sup>

There is universal agreement, however, that the Parti Ouvrier had introduced Marxism to a still-Proudhonist labor force and assigned itself the task of diffusing Marxist thought. (Given the reformism of the 1890s, one is tempted to ask whether the hard line taken in the previous decade was a case of making a virtue of necessity.) But the party never resolved the question of why revolution was necessary if revolution was inevitable. It had seen its orthodoxy triumph and be-

come the theoretical basis of a unified party. Although orthodoxy shaped the destiny of the movement, this triumph was not to endure. As early as the half-decade preceding World War I, gradualist tactics were once again pursued. Responsible was Jaurès's ability to forge compromise and the lack of unity among militant socialists. Their disagreements, with the issue of ministerial participation finally removed, soon resurfaced. Indeed, militant syndicalists and socialists sympathetic to syndicalism saw the SFIO as a reformist party scarcely different from the progressive bourgeois elements with which it was once more willing to collaborate. In June 1906, *Le Mouvement socialiste* charged that the Socialist Party platform was virtually identical to that of the Radicals.<sup>18</sup> Even the socialist leadership acted sufficiently reformist to discount any reference to the 1890s as an aberration in the history of French socialism. The veterans Guesde and Vaillant, the one pursuing the dictates of his orthodoxy, the other continuing to demonstrate his concern for the workingman and revealing an ever-growing political pragmatism, began to respond as they had a decade before. They were predominant in their respective federations in the Nord and the Seine, the two most powerful socialist groups in France, and they, in turn, were followed by militant younger party chiefs such as Jean Longuet and Pierre Renaudel, as well as by the more moderate Albert Milhaud and Albert Thomas.

The socialists tried to stave off impending war. But the Guesde who in the 1880s—like Lafargue—called for revolution and internationalism, had (aside from the short-lived bitter antiministerialism shown at the time of *le cas Millerand*) returned to the patriotism and republicanism embraced in the mid-1890s. Influenced by the German party's subordination of trade unionism, his hostility to insurrection and the general strike—unlike Lafargue—was unrelenting. Guesde's faith in the state as an instrument of proletarian liberation was unshakable, and his last link with revolutionary socialism and internationalism was broken with Lafargue's suicide. Thus he differed from Jaurès and Vaillant, who retained the option of the general strike in the event of war. Little was done in France, however, to prepare the working class for its implementation. Revolutionary syndicalists clung to their dated internationalism precisely in the degree to which CGT cohesion became threatened. They retained their belief that workers would unite against war and so prevent it. When war broke out, the syndicalist chiefs were not ready for it, and the vast majority of their followers accepted the necessity of it.<sup>19</sup>

In view of the split between the mainstream of the SFIO and the trade unions, socialists who had forsworn insurrectionalist strategies, or who preferred to assign a secondary role to trade union activity, or both, found it difficult to enter into alliances with syndicalists. Theirs was not to be a labor party. French syndicalists, on their part, opposed political strategies. Guesdism was heir to the old Jacobin tradition: revolutionary, but revolutionary in its insistence on order and discipline; internationalist, but giving preference to French needs; socialist, but within the limits of the state apparatus.<sup>20</sup>

Because of its theoretical commitment to revolution, the Parti Ouvrier—and the SFIO—could not act as social democratic parties (which integrated socialism and trade unionism). Nor was the POF a vanguard party. Rooted in French republican tradition, it came to accept that tradition and its institutions. Consequently, those who placed stress on the dangers of parliamentary activity; syndicalists like Lagardelle (who was to serve in a Vichy government); trade unionists like the followers of Allemane (who also favored the general strike); and revolutionary socialists like Lafargue were soon eclipsed and became marginalized and politically isolated.<sup>21</sup> Despite the precautions insisted on in 1905, socialist members of parliament saw their importance grow within the SFIO. A consensus for the acceptance of republican institutions was reached, and no proposals for new institutions under socialism were forthcoming. The emphasis on propaganda diminished: in the years before World War I broke out, only three or four pamphlets were published a year, and Jean Longuet's efforts to set up a publication committee to print the works of Marx fizzled out.

The party rather placed emphasis on mass action, on demonstrations and petitions. There were huge campaigns in 1911–1912 over the cost of living and in 1913 over the three-year military service law, with Jaurès in the lead (although, in contrast to the followers of Guesde, he continued to give full recognition to the CGT and acknowledged its right to follow a different path). It is indeed ironic that Jaurès's vision was not so much shared by his party as by his old antagonist, Lafargue.

When war came, the great majority of socialists, like all their Western counterparts, resolutely supported the government. That most became understandably disenchanted as the war dragged on, and sufficiently impressed with Bolshevik successes to join the Third International in 1920, constitutes the exception and not the rule in the history of a movement that time and again came back to its reformist



practices. The unity Lafargue had worked so hard to maintain was shattered by the collapse of the Second International and the Leninist triumph. But even if the Marxism of the POF's founders in the 1880s was, as its critics maintained, "at best an approximation and at worst a caricature," it is also true that "from the later communist viewpoint, it was invaluable in keeping alive a tradition upon which Leninism could be grafted with ease after 1917."<sup>22</sup> The French Communist Party (PCF) owed its success to the Marxism, however elementary, that the Guesdes and Lafargues had implanted. The PCF pushed the socialists further to their left; there would be no participation in a French government until 1936, however great the need for alternative government. The second wave of Marxist penetration, then, was Bolshevik, which, ironically, was tied to the pre-Marxist tradition of Jacobinism and Blanquism. After World War II and because of the Cold War, the SFIO was pushed to its right (though it long maintained its revolutionary rhetoric), except for the short-lived Mitterrand experiment with socialism in 1981–1982.<sup>23</sup>

Would Lafargue have joined the Communist Party? If it is true that the real authority of the militants in 1920 lay in their "syndicalist vision of the factory without bosses, the society without exploiters, the nation without the state,"<sup>24</sup> certainly he would have at the outset. Whether his abiding belief in human freedom would have allowed him to stay in the party is much less clear. Remaining faithful to his nationalist stand, Guesde—who because of illness did not attend the Tours Congress—made it clear that he supported Blum's position, and the old workers' bastions of Guesdism furnished hostile votes to joining the Third International, in contrast to the younger elements and peasants who had swelled party ranks during World War I. If the Guesdists introduced Marxism, they did not introduce communism. If the SFIO sprang from Guesdist origins, communism could find antecedents in revolutionary syndicalism.<sup>25</sup>

The rump SFIO and those who joined in a massive rebuilding effort in the early 1920s remained only theoretically faithful to their revolutionary traditions. Unlike its communist rival, the SFIO was very much a government party. It supported the Radicals in the election of 1924 and in those that followed; it chose to "exercise power" in 1936, in 1945, in 1956, and, as a refurbished party, in and after 1981. The reformists who despaired of the return to "orthodox Marxism" in 1904–1905, and accordingly rejected the unified party, could scarcely have predicted these developments.

The failure of the Guesdists lay in the perception of its chiefs, including Lafargue, that the party was the party of the industrial working class. When that class did not grow as expected, the POF could not take advantage of politically conscious workers outside of industry (yet was unable to make significant inroads in such large-scale industries as metallurgy and mining). Between 1876 and 1913, the French industrial population increased only by half (from 4.5 million to about 6.7 million). As late as 1906, twenty-eight percent of the industrial work force labored at home and another twenty percent in shops with only one worker.<sup>26</sup> Until well into the twentieth century, France relied on small-scale production, and so Parti Ouvrier members, both before and after unification, appealed to people who did not exist in large numbers.

When Lafargue studied contemporary questions, he took his illustrations from the United States. Indeed, as Michelle Perrot has argued, in such theoretical writings as *The Origin of Property*, Lafargue was wholly familiar with the literature depicting “the exotic American dream” diffused by Jesuits. Insofar as he wanted a return to nature—to “primitive communism”—he was a disciple of Rousseau and very much in the tradition of eighteenth-century thinkers fascinated by America and the supposed virtues of primeval society and its “generous savages and happy barbarians.”<sup>27</sup> Like Rousseau, Lafargue believed that the fraternity and generosity once enjoyed were regrettably spoiled by progress and that the proletariat was in a poorer position than people in that earlier era. Here Lafargue owed more to Rousseau than to Marx. In style and intent, he was a moralist. His debt to Vico, another eighteenth-century thinker, whom he called the “father of the philosophy of history,” was also profound; from the latter he derived his “cyclical interpretation” of history and specifically the conviction that all societies pass through analogous stages. From this perspective it can be argued that both an idealistic formation and the eighteenth-century materialistic tradition created a resistance in France to the ideological penetration of Marxist philosophy—in contrast to Marxist strategies and an exaggerated scientism—for over a century.<sup>28</sup>

That should not prevent us, however, from acknowledging the Parti Ouvrier’s and Lafargue’s historic role: that of introducing and disseminating Marxism in France and of contributing to the rebirth of a workers’ movement traumatized by the repression of the Paris Commune—specifically of devising and building a structured organization: “the first modern political party.”<sup>29</sup> However, long before Gramsci,

Lafargue believed that a cultural revolution necessarily preceded a political revolution. To apply Marxist materialism, Lafargue undertook the study of a variety of philosophical and anthropological questions that ranged from wedding songs to the idea of the soul. His theorizing and his ties to Marx lent him a prestige second only to that of Guesde's. His activism issued from a revolutionary perspective as he worked to create and defend a united party. He insisted on separate party recognition as necessary to win mass support for socialism, from those who embraced Boulangism, from small farmers, syndicalists, and even liberals. Yet he could not agree with the Parti Ouvrier's decision to remain aloof from the trade unions and to make no response to such burning political issues of the day as Boulangism and the Dreyfus affair. And Lafargue was the sole Guesdist chief to favor the mass political strike and to want to cooperate with insurrectionary syndicalists.

He never wholly shed his earlier Proudhonism, as revealed not only in his willingness late in life to accept syndicalism but in the very titles of his works: *The Right to Be Lazy*, *The Religion of Capital*, *The Socialism of the Intellectuals*. They could have as easily come from anarchist, as from Marxist, sources.<sup>30</sup> And that Lafargue would remain in posthumous touch with later revolutionary aspirations was revealed by the continued republication of *The Right to Be Lazy* and its success with a more libertarian audience.

Finally, as a moralist who held a heroic ideal, Lafargue prized the physical qualities that had once let barbarian chiefs conquer and retain goods for their tribes. He scorned bourgeois society, founded on private ownership and the production of merchandise, in which egoism, hypocrisy, and intrigue were all appreciated. Lafargue emphasized—and exaggerated—Marx's historical materialism, which he called economic determinism, as the key to change, and he maintained that Christianity had been placed in the service of the ruling classes. But in insisting on the application of the methodology he found in Marxist thought, he came to acknowledge the view of Marxism that was defended, if not necessarily practiced, by Engels. "Our theory," Engels once said, "is a theory of evolution, in no way a dogma that must be learnt by heart or recited mechanically."<sup>31</sup> That it became a dogma was due more to Guesde than to Lafargue, who, however infrequently, tried to apply general principles to concrete cases and particular situations (like the study of the stock market). Here Lafargue had more in common with Jaurès, with whom he came to join forces against Guesde, as a faithful interpreter of Marxist thought.

# Notes

## Sources

### UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPTS

*Private Holdings.* Because of Lafargue's relationship with the Marx family and with Engels, many of the letters written by and to him may be found in various published collections of Marx's and Engels's correspondence. The Lafargues had no surviving children and hence their correspondence (particularly the letters received from Engels), collected at the time of their death in 1911 by the descendants of Charles Longuet, found their way to Marx's great-grandson, Marcel-Charles Longuet. Subsequently, they were given to Professor Emile Bottigelli, who together with Paul Meier published three volumes of the correspondence between Engels and Paul and Laura Lafargue. The originals were then sent to the Institute of Marxism-Leninism in Moscow. At the same time, Bottigelli sent the remaining letters, consisting of correspondence within the Marx family, to Paul Meier's widow, Olga Meier, who published them as *Les Filles de Karl Marx*. (Both the Engels-Lafargue correspondence and this family correspondence are described under "Published Works.") Approximately two dozen letters and parts of letters, however, were not published in this latter compilation, and they were made available to me by Mme Meier.

*Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis* (International Institute for Social History) (Amsterdam). In the Institute's Central European Department for our period there are ninety-two Lafargue letters in the Jules Guesde Papers. In the Marx-Engels Papers there are ninety-nine letters from Engels to Lafargue, dating from 1871 to 1895, only four of which are original drafts, and 242 letters (eleven in their original form) from Lafargue to Engels, dating from 1868 to 1895. There are sixteen letters from Marx to his daughter Laura (four original drafts) between 1866 and 1882, and 251 letters (five in the original) from Engels to Laura from 1867 to 1895. Most of these letters have been published in the collected works of Marx and Engels and in the Engels-Lafargue correspondence. There are scattered letters from Paul Lafargue in the Martignetti Papers (for 1883 to 1884); in the Kautsky Papers from Paul Lafargue (for 1885 to 1909); in the Kautsky Papers from Laura Lafargue

(for 1901 to 1909); in the Haan Papers from Paul Lafargue to Vaughan (for 1883 to 1897); in the Liebknecht Papers from Paul and Laura Lafargue (for 1883 to 1900) and from Laura Lafargue to Natalie Liebknecht; and occasional letters from Paul Lafargue in the Turatti Papers (for 1892 to 1896), Vollmar Papers (for 1890), and those of Bebel and Bernstein.

*Archives Nationales.* Lafargue communicated for many years with Gabriel Deville, one of the founders of *L'Egalité*. Seven cartons of Deville Papers are found under 51 AP 1-7, and cartons 2 and 3 contain fifty-two letters and cards from Lafargue. The Sûreté Générale (national police responsible to the Ministry of the Interior) files useful for our period are: F7 12485 (POF, 1894-1900); F7 12488 (Congrès ouvriers); F7 12489 (Congrès socialistes); F7 12490 (Agissements socialistes, Congrès divers, 1876-1899); F7 12494 (Congrès divers, 1891-1900); F7 12496 (Renseignements généraux sur le mouvement socialiste en France . . . 1893-1911); F7 12498 (Congrès divers, 1891-1900); F7 12513 (Congrès divers); F7 12522 (Congrès divers, 1876-1902); F7 12523 (Congrès divers, 1903-1904); F7 12524 (Congrès nationaux de la SFIO, 1905-1907); F7 12525 (Congrès nationaux de la SFIO, 1908-1914); F7 12544 (Elections législatives de 1906); F7 12553 (Notes sur la situation politique, 1899-1905); F7 12885 (Parti socialiste, 1894-1900); F7 12886 (POF, 1896-1899); F7 12887 (Socialisme, 1900-1901); F7 12888 (Congrès divers, 1895-1900); F7 12889 (Le Socialisme, 1901-1902); F7 12890 (Le Socialisme, 1902); F7 13069 (Congrès internationaux socialistes, 1896-1904); F7 13070 (Les Factions socialistes); F7 13071 (Les Congrès nationaux du POF, 1894-1898); F7 13072 (Congrès socialistes, 1899-1909); and Série BB18 1848 A91 (Correspondance de la division criminelle; Procès Lafargue-Culine).

*Archives de la Préfecture de Police.* The thick dossier on Lafargue may be found under the classification B a/1135. Other especially useful files include the following: B a/199, Le Socialisme en France, 1872 à 1881; B a/200, Le Socialisme en France, 1882 à 1884; B a/201, Le Socialisme en France, 1885 à 1892; B a/30, Congrès internationaux (Paris, 1889; Brussels, 1891); B a/223, Elections législatives de mai 1906; B a/411, Situation politique de la France, 1883-1894; B a/439, L'Internationale, 1869-1889; B a/497, Affaire Boulangeriste (attitude des socialistes); B a/1065, Dossiers Edwards and Engels; B a/1123, Victor Jaclard; B a/1472, Le Socialisme en France, 1893-1896; B a/1473, Le Socialisme en France, 1897-1914; B a/1482-84, Les Guesdistes, 1882-1895; B a/1487, Socialistes révolutionnaires russes . . . 1885-1907.

*Bibliothèque Nationale.* The Department of Manuscripts contains a letter to Edouard Lockroy, vice-president of the Chamber of Deputies dated November 19, 1893, N.A. fr. 25162, f. 64. (The Periodical Room contains copies—but not always complete runs—of the newspapers in which Lafargue published.)

*Bibliothèque Marxiste de Paris.* Formerly the Institut de Recherches Marxistes, which in turn resulted from the fusion in 1978 of the Institut Maurice Thorez and the Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Marxistes. The library contains on microfilm some of the Lafargue correspondence found in the Institute of Marxism-Leninism in Moscow, including Paul Lafargue's letters to his sister-in-law Jenny; a letter from Deville to Lafargue; and letters from Marcel-Charles Longuet, Marx's great-grandson, who was instrumental in collecting the Lafargues' correspondence after their deaths.

*Hoover Institute.* Nicolaevsky Papers, Box 623. There are three letters from Engels and Lafargue.

*Institut Français d'Histoire Sociale.* Six letters from Lafargue to Deville, fifteen letters and three postcards to Lucien Roland, and assorted other letters to and from Lafargue and from Deville to the twentieth-century historian Maurice Dommanget may be found in the Dommanget Papers, 14 AS 283. Five Lafargue letters to Benoît Malon and others are in the Eugène Fournière Papers, 14 AS 181 (2), no. 87. There are several letters from Charles Brunellière to Lafargue in the Brunellière Papers, 14 AS 10212; and clippings concerning Lafargue in 14 AS 349.

*Dissertations.* Robert Baker, "A Regional Study of Working Class Organizations in France: Socialism in the Nord, 1870-1924," Stanford University, 1967; A. Fryar Calhoun, "The Politics of Internal Order: French Government and Revolutionary Labor, 1898-1914," Princeton University, 1973; William Cohn, "Paul Lafargue: Marxist Disciple and French Revolutionary Socialist," University of Wisconsin, 1972; Michael DeLucia, "The Remaking of French Syndicalism, 1911-1918. The Growth of the Reformist Philosophy," Brown University, 1971; Jack D. Ellis, "French Socialist and Syndicalist Approaches to Peace, 1904-1914," Tulane University, 1967; Jacques Girault, "Le Guesdisme dans l'unité socialiste, 1905-1914," Mémoire principal du Diplôme d'Etudes supérieures, Paris, 1956; Stephen Gosch, "Socialism and the Intellectuals in France, 1890-1914," Rutgers University, 1972; L. Gravereux, "Les Discussions sur le patriotisme et le militarisme dans les congrès socialistes," Thèse de droit, Paris, 1913; Joy Hall, "Gabriel Deville and the Development of French Socialism (1871-1905)," Auburn University, 1983; Richard Hostetter, "The Antiwar Policy of the French Socialist Party (SFIO), 1905-1914," University of California, Berkeley, 1947; Kurt Laurisden, "Revolution in Russia and Response in France. Contemporary Views from the French Far Left, 1905-1917," New York University, 1971; Theodore Lockwood, "French Socialists and Political Responsibilities, 1885-1905," Princeton University, 1952; Nicholas Papanis, "Alphonse Merrheim and Revolutionary Syndicalism, 1871-1917," University of Wisconsin, 1969; M. R. Scher, "The Antipatriot as Patriot: A Study of the Young Gustave Hervé," University of California at Los Angeles, 1972; Wayne Wester-

gard-Thorpe, "Revolutionary Syndicalist Internationalism, 1913-1931," University of British Columbia, 1979.

#### PUBLISHED WORKS

*Lafargue's Writings.* Most of his writings consisted of newspaper articles, published singly or as part of a series. Often they were later presented in the form of pamphlets. The newspapers and reviews to which he contributed most extensively during this period (1882 and after) were *L'Egalité* (1880-1883), *Le Citoyen* (March-October 1882), *L'Egalité* of Jules Rocque (February-March 1889), *La Revue socialiste* (1880), *Le Cri du peuple* (1883-1887), *Le Socialiste* (1885-1911), *La Petite République* (1895-1897), *Le Petit Sou* (1900-1902), *L'Humanité* (1906-1911), *Die Neue Zeit* (1883-1910), *Le Socialisme* (1907-1908, 1911). The journals to which he contributed (more than an occasional article) include *La Nouvelle Revue* (1886, 1888), *L'Ere nouvelle* (1893-1894), *Le Devenir social* (1895-1897), *Le Journal des économistes* (1884), *Le Mouvement socialiste* (1903-1904), *International Socialist Review* (1900, 1905, 1907), and *La Revue des idées* (1904, 1910).

The Lafargues' correspondence with Engels, collected and annotated by Emile Bottigelli and Paul Meier, was published as Paul et Laura Lafargue et Friedrich Engels, *Correspondance* (Paris, 1956-1959). Engels and Lafargue communicated in French; Engels and Laura, in English. A complete English edition was published in Moscow and London in 1959-1960. Various collections of Lafargue's writings, usually introduced by the editor, include the following: Jacques Girault, ed., *Paul Lafargue, textes choisis* (Paris, 1970); Jean Freville, ed., *Paul Lafargue. Critiques littéraires* (Paris, 1936); Salvador Morales, ed., *Pablo Lafargue. Textos escogidos* (Havana, 1976), and Paul Lafargue, *The Right to Be Lazy and Other Studies* (New York, 1973).

*Books and Pamphlets by Lafargue.* See the bibliography in Claude Willard, *Les Guesdistes* (Paris, 1905), 707-710, 734.

*Writings on Lafargue.* See the notes to the preface, the introduction, and the afterword for an overview, and the endnotes to individual chapters.

The notes that follow are limited to identifying sources of quotations and facts used in the text. With few exceptions I have not entered into historical discussions of French socialism or the application of Marxist methodology, and could not cite all of the material used to prepare this biography without making this an even longer book.

*Abbreviations*

AN	Archives Nationales, Paris
<i>Annali</i>	Emile Bottigelli, "Documenti: lettere et documenti de Karl Marx, 1856–1883," in <i>Annali dell'Istituto Giangiacomo Feltrinelli</i> , pp. 149–219 (Milan, 1958)
<i>Annuaire</i>	"Correspondance des militants du mouvement ouvrier français, 1879–1882," <i>Annuaire d'études françaises</i> , 1962 (Moscow, 1963)
APP	Archives de la Préfecture de Police, Paris
BM	Bibliothèque Marxiste de Paris
BN	Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris
Cohn	William Cohn, "Paul Lafargue: Marxist Disciple and French Revolutionary Socialist" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1972)
<i>Daughters</i>	<i>The Daughters of Karl Marx: Family Correspondence, 1866–1898</i> , comp. Olga Meier (New York and London, 1982)
ELC	<i>Friedrich Engels–Paul and Laura Lafargue: Correspondence</i> , comp. Emile Bottigelli and Paul Meier (Moscow and London, 1959–1960)
FE	Friedrich Engels
IFHS	Institut Français d'Histoire Sociale, Paris
IISG	Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, Amsterdam
IISG-BP	Internationaal Instituut . . . Eduard Bernstein Papers
IISG-GP	Internationaal Instituut . . . Jules Guesde Papers
IISG-KP	Internationaal Instituut . . . Karl Kautsky Papers
IISG-LP	Internationaal Instituut . . . Wilhelm Liebknecht Papers
IML	Institute of Marxism-Leninism, Moscow
ISEA	Institut de Science Economique Appliquée, Paris
LL	Laura Lafargue
MECW	Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, <i>Collected Works</i> (New York, 1975–)
MEW	Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, <i>Werke</i> , 39 vols. (Berlin, 1956–1968)
Meier	Meier Papers; see Sources, Private Holdings
PL	Paul Lafargue

Unless stated otherwise, the place of publication is Paris.

*Preface*

1. Michael Kelly, *Modern French Marxism* (Baltimore, 1982), 1.
2. Neil McInnes, "Les Débuts du marxisme théorique en France et en Italie, 1880–1897," *Cahiers de l'ISEA* 3 (1960), 25. See also George Lichtheim, *Marxism in Modern France* (New York, 1966), 9; Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, 3 vols. (New York, 1981), 2:141.
3. Claude Willard, *Les Guesdistes: le mouvement socialiste en France, 1893–1905* (1965), 39–43. Also critical is Michelle Perrot, "Les Guesdistes: controverse sur l'introduction du marxisme en France," *Annales*



- (May–June 1967), 701–710. Cohn, 4. Jacques Girault, “Le Guesdisme dans l’unité socialiste, 1905–1914,” *Mémoire principal du Diplôme d’Etudes supérieures*, 1956.
4. Georges Lefranc, *Le Mouvement socialiste sous la Troisième République, 1875–1940* (1963), 161, 266.

### Introduction

1. Cited in Jean Bruhat, “Paul Lafargue et la tradition du socialisme révolutionnaire français,” *Cahiers internationaux* 6 (July–August, 1949), 71.
2. Maurice Dommanget, *L’Introduction du marxisme en France* (Lausanne, 1969), 20–21. Georges Weill, *Histoire du mouvement social en France, 1852–1910* (1911), 120.

### 1. *Faults Enough and to Spare*

1. PL to LL, then in London, June 22, 1882, ELC, 1:88. LL to FE, August 2, 1882, ELC, 1:90. PL to FE, November 13, 1882, ELC, 1:110.
2. PL to FE, August 30, October 10, 1882, ELC, 1:94–95, 104. PL to FE, June 19, 1882, ELC, 1:85.
3. Karl Marx to Nikolai Danielson, February 19, 1881, MECW, 46:61. Editor’s note, ELC, 1:88. PL to LL, June 22, 1882; PL to FE, October 10, 1882; ELC, 1:88, 104.
4. LL to FE, April 21, 1885, ELC, 1:281.
5. FE to Eduard Bernstein, June 13, 1883. Cited in Neil MacInnes, “Les partis socialistes français (1880–1895); lettres et extraits d’Engels à Bernstein,” *Cahiers de l’ISEA* 109 (January 1961), 75.
6. LL to FE, September 28, 1882, ELC, 1:100–101.
7. LL to FE, December 6, 1884, ELC, 1:251. *Le Temps*, November 30, 1884.
8. Simone Derrau-Boniol, “Le socialisme dans l’Allier de 1848 à 1914,” *Cahiers d’histoire* 2 (1957), 115–162.
9. APP, B a/1135, March 21, 1883.
10. APP, B a/1135, March 6, 1883. The third party was José Mesa. PL to FE, November 24, 1882, ELC, 1:110–111. LL to FE, December 2, 1882, ELC, 1:116. PL, “L’Affaire de Montluçon,” *L’Egalité*, November 18, 1882.
11. Karl Marx to FE, November 12, 20, 22, 27, 1882; FE to Karl Marx, November 21, 23, 1882, MEW, 35:109–121, 409–410. MECW, 46:379, 383, 385.
12. It is here that Marx, referring to his French disciples, told Lafargue he was no Marxist. FE to Eduard Bernstein, November 2–3, 1882, MEW, 35:388. Also in English, MECW, 46:356.

13. APP, B a/1135, December 13, 1882.
14. LL to FE, December 12, 1882. FE to LL, December 14, 15, 1882, ELC, 1:117–118. MECW, 46:401–402.
15. LL to FE, December 21, 1882, ELC, 1:120. Charles-Victor Jaclard and Lafargue were both influenced by Blanqui as medical students.
16. *Daughters*, 166. Yvonne Kapp, *Eleanor Marx*, 2 vols. (New York, 1976), 2:94, 244. PL to FE, January 6, 1883, ELC, 3:479–480.
17. PL to LL, June 22, 1882, ELC, 1:88–89.
18. PL to LL, August 29, 1882, *Annuaire*, 479. LL to FE, November 25, 1891, ELC, 3:137.
19. PL to Jules Guesde, January–February 1883, IISG-GP. PL, “Socialism in France from 1862 to 1896,” *Fortnightly Review*, September 1897, 453.
20. APP, B a/1135, April 29, 1883. Jean Cavignac, “Paul Lafargue et ses parents à Bordeaux,” *Bulletin de l’Institut Aquitain d’Etudes sociales* 21–22 (1975), 24. FE to LL, April 11, 1883, ELC, 1:124.
21. LL to FE, May 4, 1883; PL to FE, May 6, 1883, ELC, 1:130, 131.
22. APP, B a/1135, March 7, 1883. FE to LL, April 11, 1883, ELC, 1:124–125.
23. PL to FE, April 28, 1883, ELC, 1:127–128.
24. Lefranc, *Le Mouvement socialiste*, 52–53. Léon Osmin, *Figures de jadis* (n.d.), 181–185.
25. APP, B a/1135, April 26, 1883. Alexandre Zévaès, *Jules Guesde, 1845–1922* (1928), 68–70. PL to FE, April 28, 1883, ELC, 1:128.
26. Marcel Cachin, *Ecrits et portraits*, cited in Joy Hall, “Gabriel Deville and the Development of French Socialism, 1871–1905” (Ph.D. diss., Auburn University, 1983), 208. PL to FE, April 28, 1883, ELC, 1:126–128.
27. *L’Egalité*, October 22, 24, November 6, 1882, cited in Charles Sowerwine, *Sisters or Citizens. Women and Socialism in France since 1876* (Cambridge, 1982), 55. *L’Egalité*, March 12–April 1, 1882.
28. PL to FE, April 28, 1883, ELC, 1:128. APP, B a/1135, April 26, 1883.
29. APP, B a/1135, May 22, 1883.
30. George Woodcock, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. His Life and Work* (New York, 1972), 151. Scheurer-Kestner’s “Souvenirs de jeunesse,” cited in Georges Weill, *Histoire du parti républicain en France, 1814–1870* (1928), 360–361.
31. PL to FE, May 16, 1883, ELC, 1:132–133. FE to LL, May 22, 1883, ELC, 1:133–134.
32. LL to FE, June 2, 4, 1883, May 27 or 28, 1885, ELC 1:138–140, 288–289.
33. LL to FE, June 13, 1883; PL to FE, September 21, 1883, ELC, 1:140–141, 149. Brousse and Benoît Malon both espoused a moderate reformist socialism in contrast to the revolutionary socialism then defended by Marxists.

34. LL to FE, September 22, 1883, June 2, 4, 1883, ELC, 1:139–141, 143. Kapp, *Eleanor Marx*, 1:279–281.
35. LL to FE, June 4, 1883, ELC, 1:140.
36. LL to FE, January 12, 1884, ELC, 1:164. PL to Ernest Vaughn, n.d., IISG, Haan Papers, cited in Cohn, 216. APP, B a/1135.
37. PL to Pasquale Martignetti, July 1, 1883, IISG, Martignetti Papers.
38. Jules Guesde and Paul Lafargue, “Essai critique sur la Révolution française du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle,” *Etudes socialistes*, March–April 1903, 65–69. Daniel Ligou, *Histoire du Socialisme en France, 1871–1961* (1962), 52.
39. *Le Programme du Parti Ouvrier Français, son histoire, ses considérants, et ses articles*, Paris, n.d. (1883).
40. PL, “Socialism and Darwinism,” *Progress*, December 1883, 343–349. FE to LL, December 13, 1883, ELC, 1:160.
41. PL, “L’exode de nègre,” *La Révolution française*, May 22, 1879.
42. PL to FE, February 6, 15, March 13, 1884, ELC, 1:171–172, 176, 184–185.
43. PL, “Le blé en Amérique, production et commerce,” *Journal des économistes* 27 (July and August 1884), 42–61, 195–214. FE to LL, July 22, 1884, ELC, 1:219.
44. APP, B a/1135, November 25, 1883.

## 2. *Defending the Faith*

1. Michelle Perrot, “L’Introduction du marxisme en France et les débuts du Parti ouvrier français (1882–1889), à travers la correspondance Engels-Lafargue,” *Annali dell’ Istituto Giangiacomo Feltrinelli* 3 (1960), 745–746.
2. Joy H. Hall, “Gabriel Deville and the Abridgement of *Capital*,” *Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Meeting of the Western Society for French History*, 14–16 October, 1982 (Lawrence, Kans., 1984), 441. LL to FE, July 18, 1885, ELC, 1:300.
3. FE to LL, October 15, 1883; PL to FE, October 17, 1883, ELC, 1:158–159. Hall, “Gabriel Deville and the Abridgement,” 443.
4. PL to FE, January 10, 1886, ELC, 1:329–330.
5. FE to LL, January 17, 1886, ELC, 1:332–333.
6. PL to FE, February 6, 1884, ELC, 1:172.
7. Jean Bruhat, “Le Guesdisme dans nos départements du Nord et du Pas de Calais,” *Servir la France* 4 (May–June 1945), 1.
8. Patricia Hilden, *Working Women and Socialist Politics in France, 1880–1914* (Oxford and New York, 1986), 6–8. F. Duveau, *La Vie ouvrière en France sous le 2<sup>e</sup> empire* (1946), 426, cited in Robert Baker, “Socialism in the Nord, 1870–1914,” *International Review of Social History* 12 (1967), 16.

9. Baker, "Socialism," 16. Hilden, 8–11, 20–26, 33.
10. Baker, "Socialism," 24–28.
11. *Ibid.*, 29–33, 51. Other reasons also contributed to the decision to affiliate.
12. PL to FE, February 6, 1884, ELC, 1:173. APP, B a/1135, June 16, 1884. Hilden, *Working Women*, 25–26.
13. PL to FE, February 6, 1884, ELC, 1:172. APP, B a/1135, November 11, 20, October 20, 1886.
14. Editor's note, ELC, 1:173.
15. APP, B a/1482, cited in Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 29. PL to FE, February 6, 1884, ELC, 1:173.
16. *Le Socialiste*, February 5, 1887.
17. Beginning with the February 5, 1887, edition.
18. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 28. Marx's polemic against Proudhon, though published in French, was no longer in print.
19. Published as *Le Matérialisme économique de Karl Marx* (1884). Reproduced in *L'Ere nouvelle*, July–September 1893.
20. FE to LL, February 21, 1884; FE to PL, March 11, 1884, ELC, 1:184.
21. FE to LL, February 21, 1884, ELC, 1:181.
22. PL to FE, February 6, 1884, ELC, 1:173–174. PL to Karl Kautsky, March 31, 1885, IISG-KP.
23. *Die Neue Zeit* II (1884), 461–469. The first French version appeared in Paul Lafargue, *Pamphlets socialistes* (1900).
24. *Septième Congrès National du Parti Ouvrier, tenu à Roubaix, 29 mars–7 avril 1884* (n.d.).
25. PL, "Le Lendemain de la révolution," *Le Socialiste*, December 31, 1887; January 7, 14, 21, 1888.
26. Editor's note, ELC, 1:189.
27. PL to FE, April 10, 1884, ELC, 1:191–193.
28. For example, the issues of February 17 and 20, 1884.
29. PL to FE, April 24, 1884, ELC, 1:201.
30. APP, B a/1135, reports in April and May 1884. Cohn, 221.
31. Maurice Dommanget, *Edouard Vaillant: un grand socialiste, 1840–1915* (1956), 78. PL to FE, May 5, 1884, ELC, 1:201–203.
32. Paul Brousse to César de Paepe, February 11, 1884, in César de Paepe, *Entre Marx et Bakunine. César de Paepe, Correspondance* (1974), 247–249.
33. PL and LL to FE, November 30, December 6, 7, 10, 23, 1884, ELC, 1:250–257. APP, B a/1135, March 21, 28, 1884. PL to FE, June 24, 1884, ELC, 1:210.
34. Jolyon Howorth, "La propagande d'Edouard Vaillant pendant les années 1880–1884," *Le Mouvement social* 72 (July–September 1920), 85–86.
35. Lichtheim, *Marxism in Modern France*, 17.

36. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 187. Howorth, "La propagande socialiste," 117–119, and Edouard Vaillant. *La création de l'unité socialiste en France* (1982), 60.
37. Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, *Le Collectivisme, examen critique du nouveau socialisme* (1884).
38. Dan Warshaw, *Paul Leroy-Beaulieu and Established Liberalism in France* (De Kalb, Ill., 1991), 157. PL, *Pamphlets socialistes*, v.
39. PL to FE, June 24, July 25, 1884, ELC, 1:211, 222–224.
40. Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, *Collectivism* (London, 1908), 328. Cohn, 380.
41. PL to FE, March 27, 1885, ELC, 1:275–276.
42. FE to PL, August 11, 1884, ELC, 1:225, 229–235.
43. FE to LL, July 26, 1884; PL to FE, August 13, 1884, ELC, 1:225, 236. PL, "La théorie de la plus-value de Karl Marx et la critique de M. Paul Leroy-Beaulieu," *Journal des économistes* 9 (September 1884), 379–391.
44. PL to FE, September 18, 1884, ELC, 1:239–240.
45. PL to FE, November 18, 1884, ELC, 1:242–244.
46. PL, "Le *Capital* de Karl Marx et la critique de M. Block," *Journal des économistes* 9 (November 1884), 278–287. FE to LL, November 23, 1884, ELC, 1:246.
47. Spencer's article in the *Contemporary Review* (April 1884), 461–482; Lafargue's reply, "A Few Words with Mr. Herbert Spencer," in the London socialist journal, *Today*, June 1884, 416–422.
48. Cited in *Le Socialiste*, April 24, 1886.
49. PL to FE, April 7, July 26, 1884; February 27, March 12, 1885, ELC, 1:213–214, 225, 269, 275. LL to FE, June 11, 1885, ELC, 1:293.

### 3. *Beyond All Possible Bounds*

1. APP, B a/1135, May 1, June 11, 21, October 10, 1884; December 1, 1885.
2. LL to FE, May 27 or 28, 1885, ELC, 1:288.
3. PL to FE, June 1, 15, 1885, ELC, 1:292, 294.
4. Lafargue's *La Légende de Victor Hugo* was serialized in *La Revue socialiste*, June and August 1891. Reproduced in Jean Freville, ed., *Paul Lafargue: critiques littéraires* (1936). Tivadar Gorilovics, *La Légende de Victor Hugo de Paul Lafargue* (December, 1979), 6, 13.
5. LL to Jenny Marx, March 20, 1870, *Daughters*, 66.
6. PL, *La Légende*, reproduced in Freville, *Paul Lafargue*, 153–154.
7. LL to Jenny Marx, March 20, 1870, *Daughters*, 66. An example of such negative criticism was Ed. Biré, *Victor Hugo avant 1830*, published in 1883, cited in Roger Fayolle, "Paul Lafargue, critique littéraire et propagandiste du matérialisme historique," *Philologica Pragensia* (1976), 3–4.
8. Freville, *Paul Lafargue*, xii. Fayolle, "Paul Lafargue," 127.

9. Fayolle, "Paul Lafargue," 118, 127.
10. PL, "Un Page d'histoire," *La Revue socialiste*, June 8, 1880. Fayolle, "Paul Lafargue," 161.
11. Fayolle, "Paul Lafargue," 126–127. PL to FE, June 15, 1885, ELC, 1:295.
12. FE to LL, May 9, 1888, ELC, 2:122. *Die Neue Zeit* VI (April–June 1888), 169–176, 215–222, 263–271. *La Revue socialiste*, June, August 1891, 698–720, 161–173. PL, *La Légende de Victor Hugo* (1985).
13. PL to FE, July 12, 1885, ELC, 1:296. Yet in addition to French, Lafargue could read English, Spanish, and Italian.
14. PL to FE, July 12, 1885, ELC, 1:297–298.
15. PL to FE, November 27, 1887, ELC, 2:76. FE to LL, May 26, 1884, ELC, 1:206.
16. Marvin Harris, *Culture, People, Nature* (New York, 1998), 587–588, 591. FE, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (New York, 1972), 237, 71.
17. Claire Moses, *French Feminism in the Nineteenth Century* (Albany, 1984), 1–2.
18. Morgan is out of fashion today, but in the late nineteenth century the most respectable academic circles accepted matriarchy as the most plausible form of primitive social organization. Even so, some anthropologists find sufficient data to support the broad notion in Engels's argument that the status of women relative to men deteriorated with the advent of class society. Eleanor Burke Leacock, Introduction to *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* by Frederick Engels, 7, 21, 35. Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (New York, 1986), 21–23.
19. Laura's role is mentioned by Claude Mainfroy, "Marx et la France après la Commune . . ." in Georges Labica, ed., 1883–1893. *L'Œuvre de Marx, un siècle après* (1985), 153. Georgio Tagliacozzo, *Vico and Marx. Affinities and Contrasts* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J., 1983), 78–125. I am grateful to Cecilia Desbrisay for her observations here.
20. Engels, *Origin*, 126–128. Anthropologists and feminists find Morgan's and Engels's evidence unconvincing and Lafargue on property as representing "an outdated and revolutionary position," as dehumanizing history. They identify a cluster of explanations for patriarchy, including but not limited to private property, and for the "institution" of motherhood. Moses, *French Feminism*, 239. Mary Lefkowitz, *Women in Greek Myth* (London, 1986), Chapter 1. Still, critics admit that in recent years there has been more "convergence" between their views and Marx's ideas. Maurice Bloch, ed., *Marxist Analyses and Social Anthropology* (London, 1975), 31, 42, and Bloch, *Marxism and Anthropology* (Oxford, 1983), 99–100.
21. PL, "Le Matriarcat: études sur les origines de la famille," *Le Socialiste*,

- September 4, 11, 18, 25, October 2, 9, 16, 1886. "Le Matriarcat," *La Nouvelle Revue*, March 1886, 301–336. Charles Sowerwine, *Sisters or Citizens*, 57.
22. PL, "Evolution de la morale," *Le Socialiste*, November 20, December 4, 11, 1886.
23. LL to FE, July 18, August 7, 1885, ELC, 1:300–301.
24. APP, B a/1135, January 27, 1886. PL to FE, January 16, 1888, ELC, 2:91. Jacques Girault, ed., *Paul Lafargue. Textes choisis* (1970), 60.
25. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 144, 147. LL to FE, August 14, 1886, ELC, 1:364.
26. *Le Socialiste*, August 6, 13, October 15, 1887.
27. LL to FE, April 1, 1885, ELC, 1:279–280. APP, B a/1135, April 3–13, 1885.
28. APP, B a/1135, May 7, 18, 1885.
29. PL to FE, October 7, 1885, ELC, 1:304–305.
30. PL to FE, October 11, 7, 1885, ELC, 1:309, 306–307.
31. FE to PL, October 12, 1885, ELC, 1:310–311.
32. Weill, *Histoire du mouvement social*, 210.
33. PL to FE, October 23, 1885, ELC, 1:314–315.
34. PL to FE, September 15, 1885, ELC, 1:303. PL, "Recherches sur l'origine de l'idée de justice et de l'idée du bien," *La Revue philosophique*, September 20, 1885, 253–267.
35. LL to FE, August 14, 1886, ELC, 1:365. Marx Dormoy, in *Le Populaire*, December 2, 1936.
36. PL to LL, June 22, 1882, ELC, 1:89.
37. In *Le Socialiste*, February 27, March 16, 17, April 24, June 2, 19, July 17, 24, 1886. *La Religion du Capital* (1887), republished in PL, *Pamphlets socialistes*. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 29.
38. PL to FE, April 3, 1885, ELC, 1:279.
39. Gordon Wright, *Notable or Notorious. A Gallery of Parisians* (Cambridge, Mass., 1991), 68–69. LL to FE, end of December 1885, ELC, 1:323.
40. Fayolle, "Paul Lafargue," 163. PL to FE, March 17, 1886, ELC, 1:344.
41. PL to FE, November 9, 1888, ELC, 2:163. PL, "De l'adultère dans le présent et le passé," *La Nouvelle Revue*, February 15, 1889.
42. PL, "Les chansons et les cérémonies populaires du mariage," *La Nouvelle Revue*, November 15, 1886, 315–346.
43. PL, "La langue française avant et après la Révolution," *La Nouvelle Revue*, March 15, April 1, 1888, 385–406, 646–669.
44. PL, *La Propriété, origine et évolution* (1895), 314–315, 516, and *Le Déterminisme économique, la méthode historique de Karl Marx* (1907 ed.), 17.
45. R. R. Palmer, *The Impoverishment of Humanity: Education and the*

- French Revolution* (Princeton, 1985), 86. Patrice Higonnet, "The Politics of Linguistic Terrorism and Grammatical Hegemony During the French Revolution," *Social History* 5 (January 1980), 58, 83. Both cited by Steven Blakemore, *Burke and the Fall of Language. The French Revolution as Linguistic Event* (Hanover, N.H., 1988), 82.
46. Jean Freville, *Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels sur la littérature et l'art* (1950), 127–128.
47. Cohn, 214. Freville, *Paul Lafargue*, xviii.
48. PL to Karl Kautsky, January 21, 1894, IISG-KP. Ferdinand Brunot, *Histoire de la langue française des origines à 1950*, vols. 9 and 10, cited in Freville, *Karl Marx*, 128.
49. PL to FE, March 18, April 8, 13, 1888, ELC, 2:106, 113–115.
50. Fayolle, "Paul Lafargue," 166.
51. Sent June 16, 1887, and published as "La circoncision, sa signification sociale et religieuse," *Bulletin* . . . , n.d. Reprinted in *Die Neue Zeit* VI, (1888), 496–505.
52. FE to PL, March 20, 1886, ELC, 1:346–347.
53. Eduard Bernstein, "Paul Lafargue," *Sozialistische Monatshefte* 16 (1912), 1:24.
54. Girault, *Paul Lafargue*, 61–62.
55. FE to LL, February 21, 1884, ELC, 1:181.

#### 4. *The Parisians Have Gone Mad*

1. L. F. Ilyichov et al., *Frederick Engels: A Biography* (Moscow, 1974), 396.
2. Alexandre Zévaès, *La Grève de Decazeville, janvier-juin, 1886* (1938).
3. *La Revue socialiste*, April 1887, 297.
4. FE to PL, March 15, 17, 20, 1886, ELC, 1:341–342, 344–345. FE to Friedrich Sorge, May 29, 1886, in Karl Marx and FE, *Letters to Americans, 1848–1895* (New York, 1953), 155.
5. FE to PL, March 15, 1886, ELC, 1:341.
6. APP, B a/1135, February 28, 1886.
7. APP, B a/1135, April 16, June 3, 1886.
8. LL to FE, May 1, 25, 1886, ELC, 1:349, 352.
9. "The Decazeville Strike," *Commonweal*, June 12, 1886, 85–86.
10. LL to FE, April 21, 1885, ELC, 1:281.
11. LL to FE, June 11, 1886, ELC, 1:357–358.
12. B a/1135, August 20, 1885. Edith Thomas, *Louise Michel* (1971), 281.
13. APP, B a/1135, undated report cited in Jacques Girault, *Paul Lafargue*, 57. LL to FE, August 14, 1886, ELC, 1:363. *Le Cri du peuple*, September 26, 1886.
14. LL to FE, August 14, 1886, ELC, 1:362–363. Thomas, *Louise Michel*, 291, 194, 296.



15. LL to FE, August 14, 1886, ELC, 1:363.
16. LL to FE, September 27, 1886, ELC, 1:373–375. *Le Cri du peuple*, September 26, 1886.
17. PL to FE, September 30, 1886, ELC, 1:376. FE to LL, October 2, 1886, ELC, 1:377–378.
18. *Le Socialiste*, January 7, 14, 21, 1888.
19. PL, “Parliamentarianism and Boulangism,” *Labour Monthly*, August 1885, 373–377, reproduced for the Emancipation of Labor group.
20. LL to FE, December 27, 1888; FE to LL, May 7, 1889, ELC, 2:178, 237. APP, B a/1484, April 22, 27, 1888, cited in Jacques Néré, “La Crise industrielle de 1882 et le mouvement boulangiste,” 2 vols. (University of Paris, 1959), 2:322. Patrick Hutton, “The Impact of the Boulangist Crisis upon the Guesdist Party at Bordeaux,” *French Historical Studies* 7 (fall 1971), 228.
21. Claude Willard, *Socialisme et communisme français* (1967), 51. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 91.
22. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 79–80.
23. FE to PL, April 13, 26, 1887; LL to FE, May 11, 1887, ELC, 2:33–34, 37, 40–41.
24. LL to FE, May 11, 1887, ELC, 2:41.
25. FE to LL, May 21, 1887, ELC, 2:43.
26. PL to FE, August 16, 24, November 27, 1887, ELC, 2:60–62, 77.
27. LL to FE, July 22, 1887, ELC, 2:51.
28. LL to FE, January 16, 1888, ELC, 2:86–88. Today number 60 contains garden apartments.
29. LL to FE, May 12, 1888, ELC, 2:123, 125. AN, 51 AP2, Deville Papers.
30. There are numerous invitations to the Devilles, AN, 51 AP2, Deville Papers. LL to FE, May 12, 1888, ELC, 2:123. Kapp, *Eleanor Marx*, 1:271.
31. Maurice Dommanget, *La Chevalerie du Travail française, 1893–1911* (Lausanne, 1967), 284. *Le Socialiste*, June 5, 1892.
32. LL to FE, July 22, 1887; PL to FE, July 28, 1887, ELC, 2:52, 54.
33. PL to FE, February 5, 1888; FE to PL, February 7, 1888, ELC, 2:91, 92.
34. PL to FE, August 3, 1888, ELC, 2:150. Eleanor Marx to LL, August 9, 1888, *Daughters*, 204–205.
35. PL to FE, October 15, 1888, ELC, 2:161. Kapp, *Eleanor Marx*, 2:99. PL to FE, November 9, 1888, ELC, 2:163.
36. LL to FE, August 14, 1886, ELC, 1:364.
37. PL to FE, July 11, 1887, ELC, 2:48–49.
38. *Le Socialiste*, July 23, 1887.
39. FE to PL, October 25, 1886, ELC, 1:388–390.
40. PL to FE, April 8, 1888, ELC, 2:113.

41. *Le Socialiste*, July 23, 1887. FE to LL, July 15, 1887, ELC, 2:50. APP, B a/1135, November 18, 24, 30, December 6, 1887.
42. APP, B a/1135, July 7, November 12, 1887; August 9, 1888. FE to PL, February 7, 1888, ELC, 2:92. *Le Cri du peuple* had been dominated by Guesdists between 1884 and 1887; after that it became Possibilist and then Blanquist. Raymond Manevy, *La Presse de la III<sup>e</sup> République* (1955), 372.
43. *L'Intransigeant*, May 1, 1888. *Le Socialiste*, July 23, 1887. PL to FE, March 18, 21, April 24, 1888, ELC, 2:104–105, 117.
44. PL to FE, March 18, 1888, ELC, 2:105. FE to PL, March 19, 1888, ELC, 2:106.
45. PL to FE, March 21, April 8, 1888, ELC, 2:109, 111–112.
46. PL to Wilhelm Liebknecht, April 19, 1888, IISG-LP. PL to FE, April 2, October 15, 1888, ELC, 2:117, 160.
47. Frederick H. Seager, *The Boulanger Affair: Political Crossroad of France, 1886–1889* (Ithaca, 1969), 172. PL to Vaughan, April 27, 1888, IISG, Haan Papers, cited in Cohn, 245.
48. Jean Dautry, “Lafargue et le boulangisme,” *La Pensée* 120 (April 1965), 26–27. Hall, “Deville” (diss.), 318.
49. *Le XIX<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, May 15, 18, 1888. Néré, “La Crise industrielle,” 323, 325.
50. APP, B a/497. Guesde in *Le Cri du travailleur*, April 14, 1888, cited in Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 37.
51. PL to FE, August 8, December 6, 1888, ELC, 2:154–155, 172.
52. PL to FE, May 27, 1888, ELC, 2:129. FE to LL, July 15, November 24, 1888; February 4, 1889, ELC, 2:142, 165, 193–194. Perrot, “L’Introduction,” 743.
53. Néré, “La Crise industrielle,” 2:625–626. Zeev Sternhell, *Neither Left nor Right. Fascist Ideology in France* (Berkeley, 1986), 38. William Irvine, *The Boulanger Affair Reconsidered. Royalism, Boulangism, and the Origins of the Radical Right in France* (New York, 1989), 16, 20, 142. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 30.
54. PL to FE, November 24, May 27, 1888, ELC, 2:167, 129. Hutton, “Impact,” 227, 242–244.
55. PL to FE, May 27, 1888, ELC, 2:128, 130.
56. FE to LL, June 3, July 15, November 24, 1888, ELC, 2:131–132, 141–142, 165.
57. FE to Kelley-Wichnewetzky, December 28, 1886, cited in Ilyichov, *Frederick Engels*, 345. FE to Karl Marx, May 23, 1851, and FE, *Germany. Revolution and Counter-revolution* (Chicago, 1967), 210, both cited in Ian Cummings, *Marx, Engels, and National Movements* (New York, 1980), 42–45, 177.

58. The point is made by Michelle Perrot, "L'Introduction," 749.
59. Dautry, "Lafargue et le boulangisme," 31. PL to FE, June 5, 1888, ELC, 2:133–134.
60. LL to FE, December 27, 1888, ELC, 2:177. FE to LL, January 2, 1889, ELC, 2:181.
61. Hutton, "Impact," 227.
62. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 37–38.
63. FE to PL, January 2, 1889, ELC, 2:182. PL to Nikolai Danielson (one of the translators of *Capital* into Russian), December 14, 1889, cited in Ilyichov, *Frederick Engels*, 417. FE to LL, January 2, 1889, 2:181.
64. FE to LL, February 4, 1889, ELC, 2:193–196.
65. PL to FE, April 11, 1889, ELC, 2:335.
66. AN, F7 12 490, cited in Hutton, "Impact," 226.
67. LL to FE, end of November 1889, ELC, 2:347.

### 5. *That Damned Congress*

1. James Joll, *The Second International*, 1889–1914 (New York, 1966), 25–26.
2. Georges Haupt, *La Deuxième Internationale*, 1889–1914 (1964), 23.
3. PL to Wilhelm Liebknecht, July 14, 1886, IISG-LP.
4. PL to Wilhelm Liebknecht, April 19, 1888, IISG-LP. PL to Wilhelm Liebknecht, April 27, 1888, in Wilhelm Liebknecht, *Briefwechsel mit Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels* (The Hague, 1963), 318–319. PL to FE, April 27, 1888, ELC, 2:120.
5. PL to FE, July 25, 1888, ELC, 2:147.
6. Patricia Van Der Esch, *La Deuxième Internationale*, 1889–1914 (1957), 19–20. Joll, *Second International*, 28–29. Eduard Bernstein, *The International Workingmen's Congress of 1889* (London, 1889), 3.
7. Joll, *Second International*, 31–32.
8. *L'Egalité*, February 23, 1889, cited in Maurice Dommanget, *Histoire du premier mai* (1953), 69–70.
9. PL to FE, November 27, December 6, 1888, ELC, 2:170, 171. LL to FE, December 21, 1888, ELC, 2:175.
10. FE to Wilhelm Liebknecht, April 17, 1889, in Liebknecht, *Briefwechsel*, 334–335. FE to LL, January 2, 1889, ELC, 2:181. PL to FE, January 3, 1889, ELC, 2:186.
11. FE to Friedrich Sorge, January 12, 1889, in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Letters to Americans*, 1848–1895 (New York, 1953), 208. Cohn, 258.
12. Joll, *Second International*, 31–32.
13. W. O. Henderson, *The Life of Friedrich Engels*, 2 vols. (London, 1976), 2:719.

14. PL to FE, March 27, 1889; FE to PL, March 23, 27, 1889, ELC, 2:203, 207, 212–213.
15. PL to FE, April 14, 1889, ELC, 2:220.
16. MEW, 37:216, cited in Gustav Mayer, *Friedrich Engels. A Biography* (New York, 1969), 415.
17. PL to FE, May 3, 1889, ELC, 2:231.
18. FE to PL, May 7, 11, 1889, ELC, 2:236–237, 241.
19. FE to LL, June 11, 1889, ELC, 2:275, 277. *Daughters*, 218.
20. PL to FE, July 25, 1888, ELC, 2:147–148.
21. Anthony Wright, *Socialist Theories and Practices* (New York, 1987), 7. Mayer, *Friedrich Engels*, 415.
22. Joll, *Second International*, 33. PL to FE, July 23, 1889, ELC, 2:293.
23. Eleanor Marx to LL, Lafargue, April 11, 1889, *Daughters*, 210.
24. Kapp, *Eleanor Marx*, 2:311. PL to FE, July 2, 7, 1889, ELC, 2:285–286. Salvador Morales, “Pablo y Laura Lafargue,” *Bohemia* 56 (April 1964), 71.
25. FE to PL, July 5, 1889, ELC, 2:287.
26. Julius Braunthal, *History of the International, 1864–1914* (London, 1966), 196–197. *Protokoll des internationalen Arbeiter-Kongresses zu Paris* (Nuremberg, 1890), 2, cited in Milorad M. Drachkovitch, *Les Socialismes français et allemande et le problème de la guerre* (Geneva, 1953), 314.
27. PL to FE, July 8, 1889, ELC, 2:290.
28. *Daughters*, 218. Joll, *Second International*, 34.
29. PL to FE, July 23, 1889; LL to FE, July 11, 1889, ELC, 2:293, 291. Joll, *Second International*, 40.
30. PL to FE, April 12, 1872, ELC, 3:433.
31. “Le 1<sup>er</sup> mai,” *Le Socialiste*, May 3, 1898. PL, “Les 1<sup>er</sup> mai, 1890 et 1891,” first published in *Die Neue Zeit* and cited in J. M. Brohm’s introduction to Paul Lafargue, *Le Droit à la paresse* (1965), 21. Will Thorne, *My Life and Battles* (London, n.d.), 138–141.
32. FE to August Bebel, May 9, 1890, MEW, 37:400.
33. Mayer, *Friedrich Engels*, 419. PL to Jules Guesde, May 4, 1890, cited in Adéodat Compère-Morel, *Jules Guesde, le socialisme fait l’homme, 1845–1922* (1937), 355. FE to LL, May 10, 1890, ELC, 2:376. PL, “Le 1<sup>er</sup> Mai,” *Le Socialiste*, May 3, 1908.
34. Editor’s note, ELC, 2:181. Cohn, 266.
35. Hall, “Deville” (diss.), 342–347.
36. PL to FE, September 7, 1889, ELC, 2:310. Girault, *Paul Lafargue*, 66.
37. PL to LL, September 9, 1889, ELC, 2:313.
38. PL to FE, September 12, 1889, ELC, 2:314.
39. Dautry, “Lafargue et le boulangisme,” 40. PL to FE, September 12, 1889, ELC, 2:314–315.

40. Posters in the Musée de l'Histoire Vivante, in Montreuil. Dautry, "Lafargue et le boulangisme," 40–43. Cher Department Archives, 20M 36, cited in Dautry, "Lafargue et le boulangisme," 43–44.
41. PL to FE, September 12, 1889, ELC, 2:314–315.
42. Musée de l'Histoire Vivante, in Montreuil.
43. Cher Department Archives, 20M 36, cited in Girault, *Paul Lafargue*, 66. Claude Penetier, *Le Socialisme dans le Cher, 1851–1921* (1982), 42. Dautry, "Lafargue et le boulangisme," 45. PL to FE, September 25, 1889, ELC, 2:315–316.
44. PL to FE, September 25, 1889, ELC, 2:316. Penetier, *Le Socialisme dans le Cher*, 89.
45. Cited in Georges Stolz, *Paul Lafargue, théoricien militant du socialisme* (1937), 18.
46. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 42, 43. PL to Jules Guesde, September 25, 1889, cited in Compère-Morel, *Jules Guesde*, 344. PL to FE, October 7, 1889, ELC, 2:322–324. Gary Steenson, *After Marx. Before Lenin* (Pittsburgh, 1991), 134.
47. FE to LL, October 8, 29, 1889, ELC, 2:324–325, 332–333. As the "five successes," Engels counted Baudin, Thirivier, Lachize, and two others, Cluseret and Ferroul, "who are bound to cast in their lot with the first three."
48. Girault, *Paul Lafargue*, 68.
49. PL to Cassard (whom I have been unable to trace), June 15, 1890, IFHS, Fournière Papers. PL to FE, October 23, 1890, ELC, 2:413.
50. Robert Baker, "A Regional Study of Working Class Organizations in France; Socialism in the Nord, 1870–1924" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1967), 46–48. Madeleine Rébérioux, "Le Guesdisme," *Bulletin. Société d'études Jaurésiennes* 50 (July–September 1973), 7–8. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 117–119.
51. PL to FE, October 16, November 19, 1890, ELC, 2:406–407, 420. PL to FE, December 22, 1889; LL to FE, December 31, 1889, ELC, 2:350, 353.
52. PL to FE, November 9, 1888; November 17, 1889, ELC, 2:162–163, 344–345.
53. Comment of E. Bottigelli, ELC, 3:504.
54. Cohn, 278, 279n.
55. FE to LL, August 27, 1889, ELC, 2:302. PL to Gabriel Deville, November 4, 1890, AN, Deville Papers, 51 AP, carton 2.
56. PL to Wilhelm Liebknecht, December 30, 1890, IISG-LP. Cohn, 279.
57. PL to Pasquale Martignetti, January 7, 1883, IISG, Martignetti Papers. Cohn, 280.
58. Compère-Morel, *Jules Guesde*, 352–353.

59. Citations in Samuel Bernstein, "Jules Guesde. Pioneer of Marxism in France," *Science and Society* 4 (1940), 46.
60. PL to FE, December 19, 1890, ELC, 2:428–430. François Bédarida, *Will Thorne* (1987), 124.
61. Karl Kautsky to FE, February 18, 1891, *Friedrich Engels, Briefwechsel mit Karl Kautsky* (Vienna, 1955), 280.

## 6. *Fusillade at Fourmies*

1. PL to Gabriel Deville, n.d., AN, Deville Papers, 51 AP, carton 2. APP, B a/1135, January 27, 31, 1891. FE to PL, January 31, 1891, ELC, 3:23.
2. For example, *L'Egalité*, February 11, 1889.
3. PL to FE, January 30, 1891, ELC, 3:19.
4. FE to PL, January 31, February 6, 10, 1891, ELC, 3:22–25, 29.
5. FE to Karl Kautsky, April 7, 1891; FE to Friedrich Sorge, April 8, 1891, MEW, 38:77, 81. PL to FE, February 7, 12, 1891, ELC, 3:27, 32. Eleanor Marx-Aveling to PL, April 15, 1892, MEW, 38:571–572.
6. Alexandre Zévaès, *Ombres et silhouettes* (1928), 166–167. PL to FE, March 5, 1891, ELC, 3:34.
7. APP, B a/1135, April 9, 13, 1891. Felix Codaccioni, "L'Election de Paul Lafargue en 1891," *Revue du Nord* 56 (1974), 44.
8. Texts in *Le Courrier de France*, April 19, 1891, cited in Claude Willard, *La Fusillade de Fourmies* (1957), 23; *Le Journal de Fourmies*, April 16, 1891, cited in Jacques Girault, "Une Opération de diversion: l'instruction du procès Lafargue-Culine en 1891," *Le Mouvement social* 6 (1969), 85–86.
9. PL to FE, April 18, 21, May 1, 1891, ELC, 3:53, 54, 56.
10. Hilden, *Working Women*, 70–72.
11. Cited in Girault, "Une Opération," 87.
12. Zévaès, *Ombres*, 166–167. Codaccioni, "L'Election," 44.
13. Willard, *La Fusillade*, 34.
14. Reprinted in *Cahiers du Bolchevisme*, April 15, May 15, 1933, and cited in Zévaès, *La Fusillade de Fourmies* (1936), 8.
15. *Journal officiel. Chambre des Députés. Débats parlementaires.* (JOC), May 4, 1891. Zévaès, *Ombres*, 164. *Le XIX<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, May 6, 1891.
16. AN, BB18 1848A 91 (Procès Lafargue-Culine), May 3, 1891, cited in Cohn, 289.
17. Willard, *La Fusillade*, 63.
18. PL to FE, May 7, 1891, ELC, 3:61.
19. APP, B a/1135, June 12, 13, 15, 1891.
20. APP, B a/1135, June 22, 1891. Willard, *La Fusillade*, 39–40.
21. PL to FE, May 18, 1891, ELC, 3:63–64.

22. *L'Eclair*, July 4, 1891. Leslie Derfler, *Alexandre Millerand: The Socialist Years* (The Hague, 1977), 58.
23. PL to FE, June 25, 1891, ELC, 3:79–80. Derfler, *Alexandre Millerand*, 42–46, 50.
24. Nord Department Archives, cited in Girault, “Une Opération,” 85.
25. Girault, “Une Opération,” 89–90.
26. Cited in Girault, “Une Opération,” 90, 93.
27. Willard, *La Fusillade*, 66, Zévaès. *Ombres*, 170. Alexandre Millerand, *Paul Lafargue devant la Cour d'Assises de Douai, 5 juillet 1891. Plaidoirie de Millerand* (Lille, 1891).
28. AN, BB/18 A 91, (Cour d'Appel de Douai: July 23, 1891), May 31, June 23, 1891, cited in Cohn, 293–294.
29. Willard, *La Fusillade*, 65.
30. Girault, “Une Opération,” 103–104.
31. PL to FE, July 10, 1891, ELC, 3:89. Derfler, *Alexandre Millerand*, 59–60.
32. On November 8, 1892, by ministerial decree, Culine was conditionally freed and would turn to Blanquism. Girault, “Une Opération,” 96. Kapp, *Eleanor Marx*, 2:491. Willard, *La Fusillade*, 84. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 614.
33. Harvey Goldberg, *The Life of Jean Jaurès* (Madison, Wisc., 1962), 74. Georges Renard, “Millerand, quelques souvenirs,” *La Revue socialiste* (January–February 1950), 95. *Le Socialiste*, July 15, 1891. Willard, *La Fusillade*, 69–70. PL to Jules Guesde, July 13, 1891, IISG-GP. PL to FE, July 10, 1891, ELC, 3:89.
34. FE to LL, July 7, 1891, ELC, 3:87. LL to FE, July 10, 17, 1891, ELC, 3:88, 93.
35. FE to LL, August 17, 1891, ELC, 3:96. PL to Gabriel Deville, August 3, 1891, AN, 51 AP, carton 2.
36. Eleanor Marx to LL, September 25, 1891, *Daughters*, 233. LL to FE, August 30, 1891, ELC, 3:101.
37. Liebknecht, *Briefwechsel*, 358. LL to FE, August 20, 1891, ELC, 3:101.
38. *Le Socialiste*, August 12, 1891. PL to Jules Guesde, September 30, 1891, IISG-GP. Bruhat, “Paul Lafargue,” 69.
39. *Le Socialiste*, October 10, 1891.
40. PL to FE, October 4, 10, 1891, ELC, 3:110, 113. Girault, *Paul Lafargue*, 70.
41. According to the Lille police commissioner, cited in Codaccioni, “L'Election,” 45.
42. *Ibid.*, 43. LL to FE, October 16, 1891, ELC, 3:119. *Le Socialiste* was a weekly. PL to FE, October 4, 1891, ELC, 3:110–111.
43. Girault, *Paul Lafargue*, 71.
44. Cited in Codaccioni, “L'Election,” 45.

45. Ibid., 46. PL to Jules Guesde, October 2, 1891, IISG-GP. FE to August Bebel, October 24, 1891, MEW, 38:186.
46. Zévaès, *Ombres*, 174. PL to FE, October 24, 1891, ELC, 3:123.
47. Codaccioni, “L’Election,” 47. Zévaès, *Ombres*, 175.
48. Willard, *La Fusillade*, 77. LL to FE, November 3, 1891, ELC, 3:127–128.
49. *Le Socialiste*, October 31, 1891.
50. Willard, *La Fusillade*, 77–79. Zévaès, *De l’Introduction du Marxisme en France* (1947), 152.
51. APP, B a/1135, October 29, 1891.
52. Derfler, *Alexandre Millerand*, 60–61. The vote was 6,420 against 5,175. Jean Jolly, ed., *Dictionnaire des parlementaires français, 1889–1940*, 8 vols. (1960–1977), 6:2089.
53. Codaccioni, “L’Election,” 47.
54. FE to August Bebel, November 9, 1891, MEW, 38:209. FE to Friedrich Sorge, November 14, 1891, MEW, 38:216.
55. *L’Economiste français*, December 5, 1891.
56. JOC, session of November 9, 1891, 2081. Derfler, *Alexandre Millerand*, 61.
57. LL to FE, November 27, 1891, ELC, 3:134. APP, B a/1135, November 9, 10, 1891.
58. Kapp, *Eleanor Marx*, 2:495. PL to FE, November 18, 1891, ELC, 3:133.
59. In *Le Jour*, cited in Zévaès, *Ombres*, 177–178.
60. Zévaès, *Ombres*, 177–178, 179.
61. AN, BB/18 1848 A 91. Leslie Derfler, *Paul Lafargue and the Founding of French Marxism, 1842–1882* (Cambridge, Mass., 1991), 105–107. Press clippings in APP, B a/1135. *L’Echo de Paris*, November 4, 1891. *Le Matin*, November 15, 16, 1891. *Le Figaro*, November 17, 1891.
62. *Le Matin*, November 15, 1891. Zévaès, *Ombres*, 178.
63. *Le Paris*, November 17, 1891. JOC, session of December 7, 1891, 2057.
64. FE to August Bebel, November 26, 1891, MEW, 38:219–220. Kapp, *Eleanor Marx*, 2:496.
65. LL to FE, November 25, 1891, ELC, 3:136–137.
66. PL to FE, November 26, 1891, ELC, 3:138. FE to August Bebel, November 25, 1891, MEW, 38:219. Kapp, *Eleanor Marx*, 2:497–498.
67. FE to LL, November 27, 1891, ELC, 3:139–141.
68. FE to August Bebel, December 1, 1891, MEW, 38:225–226. Kapp, *Eleanor Marx*, 2:500.
69. PL to FE, November 26, 1891; LL to FE, November 28, 1891; FE to LL, December 1, 1891; FE to PL, December 3, 1891, ELC, 3:138, 142, 144.
70. Kapp, *Eleanor Marx*, 2:502.
71. JOC, session of December 7, 1891, 2456–2457.



7. *A Dangerous Dream*

1. *Le Socialiste*, October 31, 1885.
2. *Le Socialiste*, July 30, 1887.
3. Alexandre Zévaès, *Notes et souvenirs d'un militant* (1913), 183–184.
4. JOC, session of December 8, 1891, 2487–2490.
5. Cited by Madeleine Rébérioux in her preface to Louis Lévy, *L'Anthologie de Jean Jaurès* (1983), 19.
6. The vote was 393 to 109. JOC, December 8, 1891, 2504. *Le Socialiste*, December 19, 26, 1891; January 2, 1892. Zévaès, *Notes*, 186.
7. *Le Temps*, December 10, 1891. APP, B a/1135, December 10, 1891. Brousse cited in Zévaès, *Notes*, 125, and *Ombres*, 196.
8. *La Révolution française*, January 17, 1879. *Le Socialiste*, December 10–17, 1911.
9. PL to FE, December 9, 1891, ELC, 3:146.
10. FE to PL, December 19, 1891; PL to FE, December 26, 1891, ELC, 3:148–149. PL, “Mon début à la Chambre,” *Le Socialiste*, December 26, 1891; January 2, 23, 1892.
11. FE to LL, October 14, 1892, ELC, 3:202. FE to Friedrich Sorge, January 6, 1892; October 7, 1893, in Marx and FE, *Letters to Americans*, 240, 256. Vaillant in *L'Eclair*, December 12, 1891.
12. PL to FE, December 9, 26, 1891, ELC, 3:146, 149.
13. The Paris police dossier on Lafargue contains an itinerary for most of 1892. *Le Socialiste*, January 2, 1892.
14. LL to Wilhelm Liebknecht, March 9, 1892, IISG-LP. Eleanor Marx to LL, July 26, 1892, *Daughters*, 240. LL to FE, December 28, 1891, ELC, 3:350–351.
15. *Le Socialiste*, September 11, 1892. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 68.
16. *Neuvième Congrès national du Parti Ouvrier tenu à Lyon du 26 au 28 novembre 1891* (Lille, n.d.).
17. Guesde in *Le Socialiste*, December 26, 1891.
18. *Le Socialiste*, April 12, 1892. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 70.
19. *Le Socialiste*, December 26, 1891; January 23, 1892.
20. *Le Socialiste*, February 14, 21, 1892.
21. FE to LL, January 6, February 3, 1892, ELC, 3:155, 158. FE to LL, March 14, April 19, 1892; FE to PL, May 19, 1892, ELC, 3:164, 168, 173.
22. *La Revue socialiste*, January 1901, 86. Alexandre Zévaès, *Les Guesdistes* (1911), 76. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 67–71. Lefranc, *Le Mouvement socialiste*, 115.
23. PL, *Le Communisme et l'évolution économique* (Lille, 1892), 26. *Le Socialiste*, May 15, 1892.

24. LL to FE, July 29, 1892, ELC, 3:186–188. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 44, 71. Girault, *Paul Lafargue*, 68.
25. Cited in Mayer, *Friedrich Engels*, 283.
26. FE to PL, November 3, 12, 1892, ELC, 3:208, 211–212.
27. *Dixième Congrès national du Parti Ouvrier tenu à Marseille du 24 au 28 septembre 1892* (Lille, n.d.), 33. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 72. Unsigned editorial, *Le Socialiste*, May 20, 1893.
28. *Le Socialiste*, October 10, 1892. Baker, “A Regional Study,” 73. PL to FE, February 23, 1893, ELC, 3:239. LL to FE, March 6, 1893, ELC, 3:247.
29. *Le Citoyen*, April 3, 1882.
30. Manifesto of the POF’s National Council (November 8, 1892), *Le Socialiste*, November 14, 1892. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 64–65.
31. Lafargue in *Le Socialiste*, March 11, 1891. Guesde in *Le Socialiste*, October 16, 1892. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 64.
32. PL to FE, October 5, 1892, ELC, 3:196–197. Cohn, 314.
33. APP, B a/1135, October 6, 1892.
34. FE to LL, October 14, 1892, ELC, 3:201. JOC, October 20, 1892, 1281–1282.
35. JOC, October 27, 1892, 1350–1353. APP, B a/1135, October 28, 1892. *Le XIX<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, October 28, 1892. Lafargue attended—and spoke during—debates on industrial conciliation and women’s working conditions on October 22 and 29.
36. FE to August Bebel, November 6, 1892, MEW, 38:509. *La Petite République*, October 30, 1892. PL, *La Démocratie socialiste allemand devant l’histoire* (Lille, 1893). PL to FE, October 21, November 1, 1892; FE to PL, November 3, 1892, ELC, 3:204, 207–208.
37. FE to PL, November 22, 1892; FE to LL, December 5, 1892, ELC, 3:213, 220–221.
38. JOC, session of February 16, 1893. LL to FE, February 10, 1893, ELC, 3:232–233. PL to FE, March 1, 1893, ELC, 3:245–246. APP, B a/1135, February 2, 1893.
39. PL to FE, January 3, 26, 1893, ELC, 3:226, 229, 231. *Le Socialiste*, January 1, 1893. *Vorwärts*, January 6, 1893. PL to FE, January 26, 1893, ELC, 3:229, 231.
40. LL to FE, February 10, 1893, ELC, 3:234.
41. FE to LL, February 12, 1893, ELC, 3:236.
42. *Le Socialiste*, February 19, 1893. PL to FE, February 23, 1893, ELC, 3:238–239.
43. *Le Socialiste*, February 19, April 9, 1892.
44. LL to FE, November 28, 1892; February 10, 1893, ELC, 3:215, 232.
45. Claude Willard, ed., *La Correspondance de Charles Brunellière, 1880–*

- 1917 (1968), 13–14. Brunellière to PL, February 21, 1892, IFHS, 14AS, 102/12, folio III. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 315. Jacques Julliard, *Fernand Pelloutier et les origines du syndicalisme d'action directe* (1971), 78.
46. Willard, *La Correspondance*, 243. Julliard, *Fernand Pelloutier*, 50. Georges Suarez, *Briand: Sa vie, son œuvre, avec son journal et de nombreux documents inédits*, vol. 1; *Le Révolté circonspect*, 1862–1904 (1938), 99–101.
47. Suarez, *Briand*, 1:95–96. Julliard, *Fernand Pelloutier*, 51.
48. Julliard, *Fernand Pelloutier*, 50. Suarez, *Briand*, 1:111, 122. Dommanget, *La Chevalerie*, 398–399, 418–419.
49. *M. l'abbé Naudet et le citoyen Paul Lafargue à l'Hippodrome lillois. Conférence contradictoire* (Lille, 1892).
50. Weill, *Histoire du mouvement social*, 396–400.
51. APP, B/a 1611, cited in Robert Brecy, *La Grève générale en France* (1969), 6.
52. The FNS is virtually ignored by Georges Lefranc in his survey of Marxist trade union ties. “Marxisme et Syndicalisme,” *Le Nef* 7 (1950), 64–78. It is given minimal coverage elsewhere. See, for example, Rolande Trempe, “1871–1914,” in Claude Willard, ed., *La France ouvrière* (1995), 1:278–279. Gary Steenson, *After Marx, Before Lenin* (Pittsburgh, 1991), 127.
53. F. F. Ridley, *Revolutionary Syndicalism in France* (Cambridge, 1970), 64. Robert Stuart, *Marxism at Work. Ideology, Class and French Socialism During the Third Republic* (Cambridge, 1992), 187, 203.
54. No FNS congress was held in 1890. *L'Egalité*, March 12, 1882, cited in Stuart, *Marxism at Work*, 215. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 33.
55. Brecy, *La Grève générale*, 7. Marx to Eccarius, September 10, 1868, cited in Brecy, *La Grève générale*, 14.
56. FE to LL, May 10, 1890, ELC, 2:376.
57. Brecy, *La Grève générale*, 32–34. Julliard, *Fernand Pelloutier*, 79. Charles Brunellière to PL, September 15, 1892, cited in Willard, *La Correspondance*, 68–70.
58. Steenson, *After Marx*, 127.
59. *Douzième Congrès National du Parti Ouvrier Français tenu à Nantes du 14 au 16 septembre 1894* (Lille, 1894).
60. Ridley, *Revolutionary Syndicalism*, 65–68. André May, *Les Origines du syndicalisme révolutionnaire, 1871–1906* (1913), 80–84. Michel Winock, “Pour une histoire du socialisme en France,” *Commentaire* 41 (spring 1988), 167.
61. Winock, “Pour une histoire,” 167. Stuart, *Marxism at Work*, 186.
62. *Dixième Congrès national du Parti ouvrier tenu à Marseille du 24 au 28 septembre 1892* (Lille, n.d.). PL to FE, October 5, 1892, ELC, 3:196.

8. *Peasants and Patriots*

1. PL, "Peasant Proprietorship in France," *Today*, April 1884, 273.
2. FE to LL, March 31, 1884, ELC, 1:187.
3. MECW, 24:517–518.
4. Manifesto cited in G. D. H. Cole, *A History of Socialist Thought* (London, 1963), 3:325. Guesde cited in Harvey Goldberg, "Jaurès and the Formulation of a Socialist Peasant Policy," *International Review of Social History* 2 (1957), 379, 380.
5. Alexander Klein, *Les Théories agraires du collectivisme* (1906), 35. David Mitrany, *Marx Against the Peasant* (Chapel Hill, 1951), 18.
6. Klein, *Les Théories*, 14–19, 32–33.
7. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 366. PL, "La Crise agricole en Champagne," *Le Socialiste*, September 19, 1891. Carl Landauer, "The Guesdists and the Small Farmer," *International Review of Social History* 6 (1961), 214. Of course, not all who worked on farms owned them. Harvey Goldberg estimated that for the pre-1914 period rural laborers comprised forty percent of the rural population. "The Myth of the French Peasant," *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 13 (July 1954), 373.
8. Adéodat Compère-Morel, *Les Propos d'un rural* (1902). PL, "La Propagande socialiste dans les campagnes," *Le Socialiste*, October 23, 1892. Landauer, "The Guesdists," 214.
9. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 322. Jacques Julliard, "L'Éternel guesdisme," *Critique* (November 1966), 955–956. Barbara Mitchell, *The Practical Revolutionaries* (New York, 1987), 178.
10. PL to FE, July 21, 1889, ELC, 2:286.
11. Sixty-eight replies to the inquiry may be found in Guesde's papers, in the IISG. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 369.
12. PL, "Le Propagande socialiste," *Le Socialiste*, October 23, 1892.
13. PL, "La Propriété paysanne et l'évolution économique," *L'Ere nouvelle*, November 1894, 298–299. PL, *Programme agricole du Parti ouvrier français* (Lille, 1894). Lafargue's report, first published in *L'Ere nouvelle*, was appended.
14. *Dixième Congrès national du Parti ouvrier tenu à Marseille du 24 au 28 septembre 1892*.
15. M. Bourgin, "L'Intensité de la crise agricole d'après la statistique décennale de 1892," *Revue politique et parlementaire*, September 1898, 522–523. The total rural population amounted to 67.6 percent of the population in 1876. It was still 59.9 percent in 1906. M. Augé-Laribé, *L'Evolution de la France agricole* (1912), 174, cited in Goldberg, "Jaurès," 374–375.
16. *Douzième Congrès national du Parti Ouvrier Français tenu à Nantes du 14 au 16 septembre 1894*, 19. *Programme agricole du Parti Ouvrier*

- Français commenté par Paul Lafargue* (1895), 23–31. Landauer, “The Guesdists,” 214.
17. Goldberg, “Jaurès,” 373, 376. Edouard Lynch, “Les Socialistes aux champs,” *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 42 (April–June 1995), 285–286.
  18. Gary Steenson, *Karl Kautsky, 1854–1938* (Pittsburgh, 1978), 107–108, 110. Emile Vandervelde, *Le Socialisme et l'agriculture* (Brussels, 1906), cited in Mitrany, *Marx Against the Peasant*, 9, 10. Klaus Misgeld et al., *Creating Social Democracy* (University Park, Penn., 1992), 415.
  19. Engels's pamphlet, an elaboration of his last article in *Die Neue Zeit* (vol. 1894–1895), “Die Bauernfrage in Frankreich und Deutschland,” was reprinted in French as “La Question agraire,” in *Le Mouvement socialiste*, October 1, 1900, 391, 396.
  20. FE, “La Question agraire,” 400. FE to PL, November 22, 1894, ELC, 3:343–344.
  21. Mayer, *Friedrich Engels*, 147–152. H. Mayer, “Marx, Engels, and the Politics of the Peasantry,” *Cahiers de l'ISEA* (Série S. 3), 105–106, 109, 150.
  22. FE to PL, November 22, 1894, ELC, 3:343–344. Landauer, “The Guesdists,” 216.
  23. FE to Friedrich Sorge, November 10, 1894, in Marx and FE, *Letters to Americans*, 264–265.
  24. Eleanor Marx to LL, November 5, 1894, *Les Filles de Karl Marx. Lettres inédites* (1979), 305. *Le Socialiste*, December 18, 1892. FE to PL, December 18, 1894, ELC, 3:350.
  25. The exception was Jean Allemane (and his followers). Landauer, “The Guesdists,” 216, 219–220, 223, 224.
  26. Cited in Eric Hobsbawm, *History of Marxism* (Bloomington, 1982), 1:262. He found Engels's remark in MEW, 22:499.
  27. Gareth Stedman Jones, “Engels and the History of Marxism,” in Hobsbawm, *History of Marxism*, 1:322. A. Voden, “Talks with Engels,” in *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels* (Moscow, n.d.), 328.
  28. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 70–71, 371. Goldberg, “Jaurès,” 372.
  29. *Le Socialiste*, March 25, 1891. Lafargue's speech and bill were reproduced in *Le Socialiste*, February 21, 1892.
  30. Robert Tombs, ed., *Nationhood and Nationalism in France. From Boulangism to the Great War, 1889–1918* (London and New York, 1991), 22–38, 108.
  31. *Le Socialiste*, June 17, 1893. Conseil National, *Aux Travailleurs de France. Onze ans de Parti ouvrier français* (1901), 32–33.
  32. Michael Winock, “Socialisme et patriotisme en France, 1891–1914,” *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 20 (1973), 401–402, 405. *Le Socialiste*, August 19, 1891. *Neuvième Congrès national du Parti ouvrier*

- tenu à Lyon du 26 au 28 novembre 1891* (Lille, n.d.), cited in A. Zévaès, *Un Apôtre du rapprochement franco-allemand, Jean Jaurès* (1941), 135. Kurt Lauridsen, “Revolution in Russia and Response in France” (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1971), 2:16.
33. PL, “Alsace-Lorraine,” *Le Socialiste*, March 11, 1891.
34. *Le XIX<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, October 14, 19, 1893.
35. FE to LL, June 29, 1893, ELC, 3:263. Mayer, *Friedrich Engels*, 313–314. FE to PL, June 27, 1893, ELC, 3:267–273.
36. Baker, “A Regional Study,” 45.
37. *Le Cri du peuple*, October 2, 1886. *Le Socialiste*, September 11, 1892. Max Beer, *Fifty Years of International Socialism* (London, 1945), 103.
38. Stuart, *Marxism at Work*, 420.

#### 9. Beaten But Not Stoned

1. PL to FE, February 23, 1893, ELC, 3:239. FE to PL, February 25, 1893, ELC, 3:241.
2. *L'Intransigeant*, March 5, 1892. *Le Socialiste*, January 9, 1893.
3. *Le Socialiste*, January 15, 1893. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 87–88. PL to FE, October 15, 1891, ELC, 3:117. PL to Gabriel Deville, June 22, 1893, IFHS, 14 AS 283.
4. FE to PL, February 25, 1893, ELC, 3:241, 243. LL to FE, March 6, 1893, ELC, 3:248. FE to LL, March 14, 1893, 3:249. APP, B a/1125, especially the report dated July 15, 1893.
5. PL to FE, March 23, 1893, ELC, 3:252.
6. Weill, *Histoire du mouvement social*, 288–289.
7. Hilden, *Working Women*, 36–37. JOC, November 3, 1892. Cohn, 306.
8. FE to Julie Bebel, MEW, 39:60. FE to Friedrich Sorge, March 18, 1893, MEW, 39:132. APP, B a/1135, March 28, 1893.
9. PL to FE, April 14, 1893, ELC, 3:254–257.
10. *La Revue socialiste*, January 1901, 86. Zévaès, *Les Guesdistes*, 76. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 68–71. Lefranc, *Le Mouvement socialiste*, 115.
11. Calais speech given March 7, 1893, in Weill, *Histoire du mouvement social*, 292. “Les Conférences de Lafargue,” *Le Socialiste*, April 2, 1892. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 69, 71. PL to Jules Guesde, November 14, 1892, IISG-GP.
12. *Le Socialiste*, July 29, 1893. Cohn, 327.
13. Ernest Labrousse, “La Montée du socialisme, 1848–1945,” *La Revue socialiste*, May 1946, 23–24. *Le Temps*, September 8, 1893. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 75. LL to FE, October 14, 1893, ELC, 3:302.
14. *L'Humanité*, November 28, 1911.
15. *Le Socialiste*, September 30, 1893. Jolly, *Dictionnaire des parlementaires français*, 6:2089. *Le Socialiste*, August 20, 26, September 2, 1893.

16. PL to FE, September 5, October 10, 1893, ELC, 3:290, 295.
17. PL to FE, November 5, 1893, ELC, 3:291.
18. Parti Socialiste, *5<sup>e</sup> Congrès national tenu à Toulouse les 15, 16, 17, et 18 octobre 1908. Compte rendu sténographique* (n.d.).
19. FE to PL, October 13, February 25, 1893, ELC, 3:295, 241. FE to LL, December 19, 1893, ELC, 3:319. Stolz, *Paul Lafargue, théoricien*, 13. *Le Socialiste*, October 31, 1892.
20. LL to FE, October 14, 1893, ELC, 3:303, 313–314. FE to August Bebel, October 18, 1893, MEW, 39:153–154.
21. FE to August Bebel, October 18, 1893, MEW, 39:153–154. FE to Victor Adler, December 22, 1894, MEW, 39:353.
22. LL to FE, October 13, 16, 1893, ELC, 3:297, 305. FE to PL, November 19, 1893; December 29, 1894; January 13, 1895, ELC, 3:311, 353, 355. Eleanor Marx to LL, November 17, 1893, *Daughters*, 245, 246.
23. Léon de Seilhac, *Le Monde socialiste* (1904), 42–44.
24. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 78. Letters from Gabriel Deville to Jules Guesde, June 17, July 3, 1888, cited in Compère-Morel, *Jules Guesde*, 312–313, 129. Gabriel Deville to Maurice Dommanget, September 6, November 21, December 27, 1935, IFHS, 14AS 238 (vii), cited in Hall, “Deville” (diss.), 474–475.
25. Cohn, 329. Steenson, *Karl Kautsky*, 92.
26. FE to LL, December 19, 1893, ELC, 3:318. FE to PL, March 6, 1894, ELC, 3:323–326.
27. Goldberg, *Jean Jaurès*, 112.
28. Jean Jaurès and PL, *Idéalisme et matérialisme dans la conception de l’histoire* (Lille, 1901; originally published in 1895).
29. Ibid., 34, 38–39. Some of the translations from Steven Vincent’s *Between Marxism and Anarchism. Benoît Malon and French Reformist Socialism* (Berkeley, 1992), 87.
30. Lichtheim, *Marxism in Modern France*, 20, 21.
31. PL, “Les Dernières élections législatives et les partis politiques en France,” *L’Ere nouvelle*, August 1894, 330.
32. PL to FE, March 8, 1894, ELC, 3:327.
33. AN, F7 12490, September 18, 1894.
34. FE to PL, January 22, 1895, ELC, 3:324–325.
35. FE to PL, April 3, 1895; April 11, June 2, 1894, ELC, 3:373, 327, 332.
36. FE to PL, January 22, 16, 1895, ELC, 3:363–364, 359. PL to FE, January 16, 1895, ELC, 3:359.
37. PL to FE, January 16, 1895, ELC, 3:360.
38. Jean Freville, *Lénine à Paris* (1967), 29–30.
39. J. Tchernoff, *Dans le Creuset des civilisations: des prodromes du bolchévisme* (1938), 134–136. E. M. Makrenova, “Unpublished Writings:

Lafargue and the Creation of the Marxist Workers Party of France” (in Russian), *Voprosy Istorii* 11 (1978), 125.

# 10. *Let Us Storm the Forts*

1. Cited in Henderson, *Friedrich Engels*, 724.
2. FE to LL, December 17, 1894, ELC, 3:347–348.
3. Eleanor Marx-Aveling to LL, October 8, 1895, *Daughters*, 278–279. *Les Filles de Karl Marx*, 32–33. LL to Karl Kautsky, June 15, 1898, IISG-KP. Kapp, *Eleanor Marx*, 2:590. Marie Mullaney, *Revolutionary Women. Gender and the Socialist Revolutionary* (New York, 1983), 42.
4. Eleanor Marx-Aveling to LL, March 22, November 5, 22, 1894; FE to LL, December 25, 1894; *Daughters*, 250–251, 252, 258–260, 274.
5. FE to LL and Eleanor Marx-Aveling, November 14, 1894, ELC, 3:342.
6. FE to LL, January 19, 1895, ELC, 3:360–361. LL to Eduard Bernstein, October 19, 1899, IISG-BP.
7. Kapp, *Eleanor Marx*, 2:592. PL to Eduard Bernstein, April 3, 1899, IISG-BP.
8. *Der Sozialdemokrat*, August 15, 1895, reprinted in *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels* (Moscow, n.d.), 358–359.
9. As we saw, Engels’s last act of generosity provided Lafargue with fees from the German socialist press.
10. Engels’s will in MEW, 39:505–511. See *The (London) Times*, weekly ed., September 13, 1895. Cohn, 340.
11. LL to Eleanor Marx-Aveling, September 23, 1895, Meier. René Fontaine, “Draveil et son histoire” (promotional brochure available at the Draveil municipal library), 7.
12. APP, B a/1135, November 27, 1896. LL to Eleanor Marx-Aveling, undated fragment (April 1896), Meier.
13. Eleanor Marx-Aveling to Karl Kautsky, September 28, 1897; March 15, 1898, IISG-KP, cited in Kapp, *Eleanor Marx*, 2:639, 640.
14. PL to Gabriel Deville, n.d., AN, Deville Papers, 51 AP, carton 2. Salvador Morales, ed., *Pablo Lafargue. Textos escogidos* (Havana, 1976), 67.
15. APP, B a/1135, April 15, 1887. PL and Wilhelm Liebknecht, *Karl Marx. His Life and Work* (New York, 1945), 63. Originally published in *Die Neue Zeit* in 1891. LL to Eleanor Marx-Aveling, September 1, 1896, *Daughters*, 292, 298, 291.
16. *Les Filles de Karl Marx*, 26.
17. Max Beer, *Fifty Years of International Socialism* (London, 1935), 95–96. Dormoy in *Le Populaire*, November 29, 1936.
18. Robert-Jean Longuet, *Karl Marx: Mon arrière-grandpère* (1977), 243.



19. *Les Filles de Karl Marx*, 17. Louis Lévy, *Comment ils sont devenus socialistes* (1931), 98–99.
20. Longuet, *Karl Marx*, 243.
21. APP, B a/1135, July 16, August 29, 1896. Lucien Roland, “Dans l’imité des Lafargue,” *Le Populaire*, December 2, 1936.
22. AN, F7 12886, July 28, 29, November 16, 30, 1896. Cohn, 341.
23. Zévaès, *Notes*, 129.
24. Article by F. Mehring in *Die Neue Zeit*, December 8, 1911. Also *L’Humanité*, December 3, 1911.
25. C. Gaillard, *Le Royaume socialiste* (1902), 213, cited in Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 133.
26. AN, F7 12886, February 23, 1899.
27. APP, B a/1135, July 16, August 29, 1896.
28. PL to Jules Guesde, November 2, 1896, IISG-GP. APP, B a/1135, November 5, 11, 19, 1896.
29. *Daughters*, 297–298, 302. Wilhelm Liebknecht to LL, April 9, 1898; Eduard Bernstein to LL, April 1898, *Daughters*, 311–312.
30. Charles Longuet to Eleanor Marx, November 23, 1897, Meier.
31. Charles Longuet to PL, December 5, 17, 1897; Charles Longuet to LL, August 2, October 16, 1898, Meier.
32. *Le Socialiste*, January 6, December 8, 1894; July 21, November 29, 1895. APP, B a/1135, February 14, 1897. *La Petite République*, February 14, 1897.
33. PL to Karl Kautsky, September 21, 1893, IISG-KP.
34. FE to LL, December 13, 1883, ELC, 1:160. LL to FE, December 13, 1889, ELC, 2:349. PL to FE, April 8, 1888; November 17, 1889, ELC, 2:113, 344.
35. Exceptions are the Russian, V. C. Hoffenschefer, *Iz Istorii Marksistskoi Kritiki: Pol Lafargue I Borba Za Realism* (*Regarding the History of Marxist Criticism*) (Moscow, 1963); the French scholars, Jean Freville, *Paul Lafargue*, Roger Fayolle, “Paul Lafargue,” 117–127, 161–171, Claude Willard, “Paul Lafargue, critique littéraire,” *Le Mouvement social* (April–June 1967), 102–110, and Madeleine Rébérioux, “Avant-garde esthétique et avant-garde politique; le socialisme français entre 1890 et 1914,” *Esthétique et marxisme* (1974), 21–38; and Stefan Morawski, “Pablo Lafargue y el desarrollo de una estetica marxista,” *Casa de las Americas* 10 (1969), 25–37.
36. Rébérioux, “Avant-garde esthétique,” 23–24.
37. Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism* (New York, 1981), 2:59.
38. FE to Franz Mehring, July 14, 1893, cited in Freville, *Karl Marx*, 125–126.
39. Kolakowski, *Main Currents*, 2:344. Freville, *Karl Marx*, 129–130.
40. Rébérioux, “Avant-garde esthétique,” 27–29. Thierry Paquot, *Les*

- Faiseurs de nuages. Essai sur la genèse des marxismes français*, 1880–1914 (1980), 83.
41. Rébérioux, “Avant-garde esthétique,” 30. Roger Fayolle, *Manuel d'histoire littéraire de France*, vol. 5, 1848–1913 (1977), 504.
  42. *Le Socialiste*, August 15, 1894. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 161.
  43. *Le Socialiste*, April 8, 1891. Claude Willard, “Paul Lafargue et la critique de la société bourgeoise,” in Dominique Grisoni, ed., *Histoire de marxisme contemporain* (1977), 3:194.
  44. *L'Egalité*, January 23, 1880, cited in Girault, *Paul Lafargue*, 199–201. Willard, “Paul Lafargue et la critique,” 3:195.
  45. PL, *Le Matérialisme économique de Karl Marx*, cited in Girault, *Paul Lafargue*, 180–181.
  46. Willard, “Paul Lafargue et la critique,” 3:196. PL, *Pamphlets socialistes*, 104, 60, 64. Willard, “Paul Lafargue et la critique,” 3:196.
  47. Karl Kautsky to PL, January 14, 1886, IISG-KP.
  48. It was not totally audacious. By 1886, the novel as the bourgeois literary form was becoming the received wisdom, deriving from Hegel's *Aesthetics* and promoted by Balzac's prefaces and *Avant-Propos* of the 1840s as well as Zola's essays of the 1870s. *Die Neue Zeit* VI (1890), 237–240. *Le Socialiste*, January 2, 1886, wrongly dated January 9.
  49. PL, “L'Argent de Zola,” cited in Freville, *Paul Lafargue*, 211.
  50. See also Morawski, “Pablo Lafargue,” 28.
  51. FE to Karl Kautsky, April 30, 1891, IISG-KP.
  52. Lafargue's earlier criticism of Zola appeared in *Le Socialiste*, November 7, 1885, and as “Das Geld von Zola,” *Die Neue Zeit* X (1891–1892), 4–10, 41–46, 76–86, 101–110. Text in Freville, *Paul Lafargue*, 173–211. See also Fayolle, “Paul Lafargue,” 167–168.
  53. Freville, *Paul Lafargue*, XVIII–XIX. Willard, “Paul Lafargue et la critique,” 105.
  54. FE to Margaret Harkness, April 1888, in Karl Marx and FE, *Literature and Art* (New York, 1947), 42–43.
  55. Morawski, “Pablo Lafargue,” 36.
  56. Georg Lukács, *Studies in European Realism* (New York, 1964), 89–90.
  57. Even the original French version was lost and had to be retranslated—for example, his “Le Darwinisme au théâtre,” also published in *Die Neue Zeit* in 1890—from the German to the French. Freville, *Paul Lafargue*, vii.

## 11. *The Myth That Seems Absurd*

1. *L'Ere nouvelle*, July 1893, 1–9. Jack Roth, *The Cult of Violence. Sorel and the Sorellians* (Berkeley, 1980), 6–8. Michael Kelly, *Modern French Marxism* (Baltimore, 1982), 13. Yet for Theodore Zeldin, “Marxism be-

- came the subject of serious study only after 1929, when the first [*sic*] French periodical devoted to it, *La Revue marxiste* was founded.” *France, 1848–1945: Anxiety and Hypocrisy* (Oxford, 1981), 373.
2. McInnes, “Les Débuts du marxisme,” 13. Daniel Lindenberg, *Le Marxisme introuvable* (1975), 69.
  3. Roth, *The Cult of Violence*, 7–8.
  4. FE to LL, April 11, 1894; PL to FE, June 26, 1894, ELC, 3:328, 335. *L'Ere nouvelle*, April, May 1893, 442–458, 1–24.
  5. PL, “Le Matérialisme économique de Karl Marx,” *L'Ere nouvelle*, July 1, August 1, September 1, 1893. “La Langue française avant et après la Révolution,” *L'Ere nouvelle*, January, February 1894, 24–46, 216–242. “M. Herbert Spencer et le socialisme,” *L'Ere nouvelle*, May 1894, 38–47.
  6. “Contradictions de la Bible,” *La Libre Pensée*, March 5, April 2, May 14, 1870.
  7. “Le Mythe d’Adam et d’Eve. Etude de critique religieuse,” *La Revue socialiste* 20 (July 1894), 26–44. Citations from the Kerr edition, PL, *The Myth of Adam and Eve* (Chicago, 1928), reproduced in Richard Broadhead, ed., *Selected Marxist Writings of Paul Lafargue* (Berkeley, 1984). Page numbers refer to this edition. Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, Mass., 1985), 2–3.
  8. FE to PL, May 29, 1891, ELC, 3:74. FE, *Origin*, 125–127. See E. A. Speiser, *Genesis* (Garden City, 1964), 8–11, and Nahum M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis* (New York, 1966), 1–16, both cited in Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, 182–183. I am also grateful for several observations shared with me by Professor Sarna, who said many of Lafargue’s views are accepted by today’s scholars, although not necessarily in the form proposed. We must remember that here, as in other instances, mythology was in its infancy at the time Lafargue was writing. FE, *Origin*, 126. FE to Karl Kautsky, April 30, 1891, MEW, 38:81.
  9. FE to Karl Kautsky, June 13, 1891, MEW, 38:88. Steenson, *Karl Kautsky*, 57, 64.
  10. Jenny Marx to Karl Marx, May 24, 1871. Cited in *Daughters*, 102.
  11. “Le Mythe de l’immaculée conception,” *Die Neue Zeit* XI (1892–1893), I, 844–850. *Le Devenir social*, May 1896, 388.
  12. McInnes, “Les Débuts du marxisme,” 40. In Catholic teaching, Mary was conceived and born “immaculately” (i.e., without original sin). But this is not to say that Mary’s mother was a virgin.
  13. *L'Ere nouvelle* also republished Lafargue’s “La Langue française avant et après la Révolution,” which first appeared in *La Nouvelle Revue* in 1888. *L'Ere nouvelle*, January, February 1894, 24–46, 216–242.
  14. Lindenberg, *Le Marxisme introuvable*, 118. Roth, *The Cult of Violence*, 8.
  15. Daniel Lindenberg and Pierre-André Meyer, *Lucien Herr. Le Socialisme et son destin* (1977), 66.

16. McInnes, "Les Débuts du marxisme," 40.
17. Lindenberg, *Le Marxisme introuvable*, 119. Roth, *The Cult of Violence*, 8–9.
18. PL to FE, April 6, 1895, ELC, 3:376.
19. "Les Origines du romantisme. Etude critique sur la période révolutionnaire," *Le Devenir social*, July 1896, 577–607.
20. Karl Marx to FE, November 30, 1873, in Marx and FE, *Literature and Art*, 133–134.
21. Fayolle, "Paul Lafargue," 170.
22. PL, "Les Origines," reproduced in Freville, *Paul Lafargue*, 116–117.
23. Ibid. 119–120. Claude Willard, "Paul Lafargue. Critique littéraire," *Le Mouvement social*, April–June 1967, 104–105.
24. FE to PL, March 20, 1886, ELC, 1:346–347.
25. Published by Editions Sociales in 1977.
26. For a collection of these "landmarks," see Marx and Engels's *Literature and Art*.
27. Freville, *Paul Lafargue*, 9–10.
28. George R. Havens, *The Age of Ideas* (New York, 1962), 365.
29. PL, "Les Origines," in Freville, *Paul Lafargue*, 119.
30. PL, "La Légende de Victor Hugo," in Freville, *Paul Lafargue*, 84. Willard, "Paul Lafargue. Critique littéraire," 104.
31. Paquot, *Les Faiseurs de nuages*, 32.
32. Morawski, "Pablo Lafargue," 31–32.
33. Freville, *Paul Lafargue*, xxii.
34. Morawski, "Pablo Lafargue," 36–37. Madeleine Rébérioux, "Critique littéraire et socialisme au tournant du siècle," *Le Mouvement social* 69 (April–June 1967), 16.
35. Kolakowski, *Main Currents*, 2:142.
36. Michelle Perrot, "Les Guesdistes: controverses sur l'introduction du Marxisme en France," *Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations* (May–June 1967), 706. Willard, "Paul Lafargue. Critique littéraire," 109.
37. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 134. Hans Georg Lehmann, *Die Agrarfrage in der Theorie und Praxis der deutschen und internationalen Sozialdemokratie* (Tübingen, 1970), 225.
38. Cohn, Chapter VIII. See Willard's articles, "Paul Lafargue et la critique" (1977) and "Paul Lafargue. Critique littéraire," 102–110.

## 12. Pleasantries or Naïvetés

1. PL, "Le Lendemain de la Révolution," articles in *Le Socialiste*, published December 31, 1887; January 7, 14, 21, 1888; and September 19, 25, 1892.
2. PL, "Le Problème social," *Le Jeunesse socialiste*, January 1895.

3. PL, "La Propriété, origine et évolution," *La Nouvelle Revue*, February 1, 1890, 526–547.
4. *Origine et évolution de la Propriété, Thèse communiste par Paul Lafargue, réfutation par Yves Guyot* (1895). Lafargue's essay, 299–530. An excerpted English translation by Charles Kerr, "The Evolution of Property," is available in Broadhead, *Selected Marxist Writings*, 1–160.
5. *Origine*, 315.
6. Engels, *Origin*, 561–562.
7. Lafitau's book was published in Paris in 1724; Charlevoix's, in 1774; Heckewelder's, originally in German, in Halle, in 1797. Hubert Lagardelle, "Pablo Lafargue, El Gran Socialista Cubano," *Revista Bimestre Cubano* 10 (January–February 1915), 13.
8. *Origine*, 303, 308. Perrot, "Les Guesdistes," 708.
9. *Origine*, 366. Lafargue cited Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding*, Book IV, Chapter iii, sec. 18.
10. *Origine*, 321.
11. *Origine*, 313.
12. *Origine*, 510, 511, 516, 527.
13. See Lafargue's five articles in *Le Socialiste*, September 4–October 16, 1898.
14. PL, *Le Communisme et l'évolution économique, Le Cri du peuple*, April 9, 1886. Willard, "Paul Lafargue et la critique," 198.
15. Willard, "Paul Lafargue et la critique," 192.
16. For example, Lafargue's article in *Le Socialiste*, December 31, 1887.
17. PL, "Origine de la propriété foncière en Grèce," *Le Devenir social*, April 1, 1895, 41–60.
18. PL, "Origine de la propriété en Grèce," 42, 45–47, 58.
19. *Die Geschichte des Sozialismus in Einzeldarstellungen*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart, 1895), 2:269–506, 719–749. The study on Campanella also appeared in *Le Devenir social*, July, August, September 1895, 305–320, 465–480, 560–578.
20. For Croce's criticism, see the appendix to his essays gathered as *Matérialisme historique et économie Marxiste* (1901).
21. Karl Marx, *Le Capital, Extraits faits par Paul Lafargue* (1894).
22. PL, "Réponse à une critique de Karl Marx," *L'Ere nouvelle*, October 1894, 113–137.
23. "La Théorie de la valeur et de la plus-value de Marx et les économistes bourgeois," *La Jeunesse socialiste* 7 (1895). "Le Socialisme et la science sociale," *Le Devenir social*, December 1896, 1047–1058.
24. PL, "La Fonction économique de la Bourse," *Le Devenir social*, April 1897.
25. *Le Socialiste*, January 14, 1888; February 18, 25, October 31, November 7, 1891; December 8, 1894. PL, *Origine*, 509–510. Willard, "Paul Lafar-

- gue et la critique,” 192. PL, *Le Communisme et l'évolution économique* (Lille, 1892), 23, 26–27.
26. *Capital*, vol. 3, 908–910, 437–438, cited in Cohn, 393.
  27. PL, “La Fonction économique,” 307.
  28. *Capital*, vol. 3, 895–896. Engels’s supplement to volume 3 was published in *Le Devenir social* in November 1895.
  29. FE to Conrad Schmidt, March 12, 1895, *Marx-Engels, Selected Correspondence* (Moscow, 1955), 459.
  30. PL, “La Fonction économique,” 290.
  31. Benedetto Croce, *Historical Materialism and the Economics of Karl Marx* (New York, 1966), 66.
  32. Georges Sorel, *La Décomposition de Marxisme* (1910), 7.
  33. *La Décomposition* was translated and reproduced in Irving L. Horowitz, *Radicalism and the Revolt Against Reason: The Social Theories of Georges Sorel* (London, 1961), 213.
  34. Roth, *The Cult of Violence*, 9–10.
  35. Horowitz, *Radicalism*, 39. McInnes, “Les Débuts du marxisme,” 6, 28–29.
  36. McInnes, “Les Débuts du marxisme,” 22, 25. Horowitz, *Radicalism*, 214. G. Delfau, “Socialisme et marxisme en France au tournant du siècle (1880–1905),” *Nouvelle Revue socialiste* 8 (1975), 31–37.
  37. Herr became an Allemanist. Charles Andler, *Vie de Lucien Herr* (1932), 90–91.
  38. FE to Joseph Bloch, September 21–22, 1890, to Franz Mehring, July 14, 1893, to H. Starkenburg, January 25, 1894, reproduced in Robert Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1978), 760–768.
  39. I am indebted to William Cohn’s perceptive analysis for this and the following paragraph. Cohn, 393–395.
  40. PL, “La Fonction économique,” 290.
  41. Larry Portis, *Georges Sorel* (London, 1980), 2.
  42. McInnes, “Les Débuts du marxisme,” 39–40.
  43. Cited in Delfau, “Socialisme et marxisme en France,” 35.

### 13. Absurd and Incredible Conduct

1. Yves Guyot, *La Comédie socialiste* (1897), 277. *Le XIX<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, October 14, 1893. Compère-Morel, *Jules Guesde*, 391.
2. Hubert Lagardelle, “Les Origines du socialisme parlementaire en France,” *Le Mouvement social*, September 1909, 184–188. *Le Socialiste*, April 22, 1891; January 3, 1897. Claude Willard, “Chronique historique. Une Thèse sur les guesdistes: quelques problèmes de méthode,” *La Pensée* 123 (October 1965), 94.
3. PL to Gabriel Deville, May 12, 1896, AN, 51 AP, carton 2.

4. AN, F7 12490. PL to Wilhelm Liebknecht, May 8, 1896, IISG-LP.
5. Derfler, *Alexandre Millerand*, 101–102. *Le Socialiste*, January 21, 1888.
6. Charles Véreque, *Dictionnaire du socialisme* (1911), 235. APP, B a/1135, July 27, 1896. Julius Braunthal, *History of the International*, 1864–1919 (London, 1966), 251.
7. Dommange, *La Chevalerie*, 494–495.
8. Joll, *Second International*, 74–76.
9. Dommange, *La Chevalerie*, 495. *Proceedings of the London Congress*, 6, cited in Joll, *Second International*, 74.
10. A full report is in *The Labour Leader*, London, 1896.
11. APP, B a/1472, November 17, 1894. AN, F7 128858, October 20, 1897. Zévaès, *Notes*, 196.
12. AN, F7 12496, October 8, 1897.
13. AN, F7 12886, August 3, 8, 1896.
14. *La Revue socialiste*, January–February 1950, 97, and May 1951, 622. Georges Weill, *Le Mouvement socialiste en France, 1893–1905* (1924), 311.
15. *La Revue socialiste*, February 1897, 235.
16. PL to Jules Guesde, May 16, 25, June 2, 1897, IISG-GP.
17. Gustave Delory to Jules Guesde, May 29, 1897, IISG, Fonds Guesde. Derfler, *Alexandre Millerand*, 124. Baker, “A Regional Study,” 84.
18. Dautry, “Lafargue et le boulangisme,” 49.
19. Dommange, *La Chevalerie*, 132–133. Julliard, *Fernand Pelloutier*, 101.
20. Melvyn Dubofsky, *Industrialization and the American Worker, 1865–1920* (Arlington Heights, Ill., 1987), 60. Leon Fink, *The Knights of Labor and American Politics* (Urbana, Ill., 1983), 23.
21. Lafargue cited in J. M. Brohm’s preface to Lafargue’s *Le Droit à la paresse* (1965), both cited by Jacques Julliard, *Fernand Pelloutier*, 107. Dommange, *La Chevalerie*, 284. André Combes, “Franc-Maçonnerie et Blanquisme,” in M. Agulhon et al., *Blanqui et les Blanquistes, Colloque International* (1981), 149.
22. Dommange, *La Chevalerie*, 339.
23. PL to Jules Guesde, November 2, 1896, IISG-GP. APP, B a/1135, November 5, 11, 19, 26, 1896.
24. PL to Jules Guesde, n.d., IISG-GP, cited in Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 135.
25. Charles Sowerwine, *Sisters or Citizens*, 64. James F. McMillan, *Housewife or Harlot. The Place of Women in French Society, 1870–1940* (New York, 1981), 32.
26. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 135. Baker, “A Regional Study,” 96.
27. APP, B a/1135, March 23, 27, 28, 30, April 14, 1898.
28. *Le Socialiste*, August 13, 1899. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 135.
29. Socialists of all denominations won fifty-seven seats, according to *La Petite République*, May 24, 1898. Aaron Noland says only forty-two

- legitimate socialists were elected, five more than in 1893. *The Founding of the French Socialist Party*, 1873–1905 (Cambridge, Mass., 1956), 62.
30. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 197. Stuart, *Marxism at Work*, 346–347. Baker, “A Regional Study,” 97.
  31. AN, F7 12886, June 7, 1897. APP, B a/1125. Jules Guesde to Wilhelm Liebknecht, June 20, 1899; July 29, 1900, IISG-LP. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 129–130, 197. Daniel Halévy, *Essais sur le mouvement ouvrier en France* (1901), 223–224.
  32. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 197. AN, F7 12886, June 18, 1897. Jean Bruhat, “Le Guesdisme dans le mouvement ouvrier français,” *Cahiers internationaux* (March–April 1949), 94–95.
  33. David Gordon, “Liberalism and Socialism in the Nord,” *French History* 3 (1989), 312–315. Guesde was to return to the Chamber in 1906.
  34. Cited in Halévy, *Essais*, 232–234.
  35. *L'Ordre*, March 6, 1940.
  36. Cited in Joll, *Second International*, 68.
  37. APP, B a/1125 (Jaurès), June 30, 1898. Daniel Ligou, *Histoire du socialisme en France, 1871–1961* (1962), 140.
  38. Goldberg, *Jean Jaurès*, 222–238. Jean-Jacques Fiechter, *Le Socialisme français de l'affaire Dreyfus à la grande guerre* (Geneva, 1965), 51.
  39. APP, B a/1125, June 30, 1898. Paul Desanges and Luc Meriga, *Vie de Jaurès* (1924), 82.
  40. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 600.
  41. *La Petite République*, March 18, 1898. Robert Wistrich, “French Socialism and the Dreyfus Affair,” *Wiener Library Bulletin* 28 (1975), 11.
  42. *Le Socialiste*, July 24, October 9, 1898. Stephen Wilson, *Ideology and Experience. Anti-Semitism in France at the Time of the Dreyfus Affair* (East Brunswick, N.J., 1982), 335.
  43. PL to Jules Guesde, June 11, 1898, IISG-GP.
  44. Joseph Reinach, *Histoire de l'affaire Dreyfus*, 7 vols. (1901–1908), 3:254.
  45. Léon Blum, *Souvenirs sur l'affaire* (1935), 117–119. Jean Bruhat, “Le Guesdisme dans nos départements du Nord et du Pas-de-Calais,” *Servir la France* 13 (July 1, 1945).
  46. *Onze ans d'histoire socialiste. Aux travailleurs de France*, Conseil national du Parti ouvrier français, 1899–1900 (1901), 74–76.
  47. PL to Jules Guesde, August 1, 1898, IISG-GP. Wistrich, “French Socialism,” 14.
  48. *Le Socialiste*, October 9, 1899. AN, F7 12496, August 11, 1898.
  49. PL to Jules Guesde, August 28, 1898, IISG-GP. S. V. Obolenskaia, “Les Activités du groupe d'études d'histoire de France,” *Annuaire des études françaises* (1964), 297.
  50. PL to Karl Kautsky, September 15, 1899, IISG-KP.



51. Dormoy in *Le Populaire*, November 29, 1936.
52. PL to Wilhelm Liebknecht, July 28, 1899; Gabriel Deville to Wilhelm Liebknecht, IISG-LP.
53. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 413–414. Cohn, 346–347.
54. PL to Karl Kautsky, July 28, 1898, IISG-KP.
55. AN, F7 12490, September 27, 1898. *Le Socialiste*, September 18–25, 1898. PL to Jules Guesde, September 27, 1898, IISG-GP.
56. Goldberg, *Jean Jaurès*, 242–243. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 418–419. *Le Socialiste*, September 18, 25, 1898. AN, F7 12886. Several reports pointed to Lafargue's absences.
57. Gabriel Deville to Wilhelm Liebknecht, July 2, 1899, IISG-LP. Dormoy in *Le Populaire*, November 29, 1936.
58. PL to Karl Kautsky, September 15, 1899, IISG-KP. LL to Wilhelm Liebknecht, January 6, 1899, IISG-LP.
59. PL to Karl Kautsky, undated (October 1898), IISG-KP. *Le Socialiste*, January 21, 1900.
60. FE to LL, December 17, 1894, ELC, 3:348. PL to Karl Kautsky, September 15, 1899, IISG-KP. Cohn, 347–348.
61. Derfler, *Alexandre Millerand*, vii, viii.
62. J. L. Breton, *L'Unité socialiste* (1912), 9. *Le Socialiste*, June 18–25, 1899.
63. Brohm, introduction to Lafargue's *Le Droit à la paresse*, 24.
64. Jean Jaurès, "L'Entrée de Millerand au ministre," *Le Mouvement socialiste*, April 15, 1901, 454–456. Derfler, *Alexandre Millerand*, 152–153. Noland, *Founding*, 94. *La Revue socialiste*, August 1899, 203–204. Breton, *L'Unité*, 11–12.
65. Text in *Le Socialiste*, July 2, 1899.
66. Noland, *Founding*, 94–95. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 422.

#### 14. Party of Opposition

1. PL to Jules Guesde, July 8, 1899, IISG, Guesde Archives. Breton, *L'Unité*, 13.
2. *Aux Travailleurs de France. Onze Ans d'histoire socialiste* (1901), 76–79.
3. Zévaès cited in Cohn, 352.
4. *La Petite République*, July 19, August 2, 1899.
5. B. W. Schaper, *Albert Thomas, trente ans de réformisme social* (1959), 60.
6. Willard, *Les Guesdistes* (1965), 424–425. Charles Brunellière to Alexandre Millerand, July 13, 1899; Brunellière to Jules Guesde, July 14, 1899, IFHS, 14AS 104/21, folio 202, 203–204. Baker, "A Regional Study," 128.
7. AN, F7 12496, July 21, 1899. AN, 51AP 2. Hall, "Deville" (diss.), 366. Deville was to evolve further to the right and enter the diplomatic service.

8. PL to Jules Guesde, March 8, 1900, IISG-GP.
9. *La Petite République*, July 15, 16, 1899. PL to Jules Guesde, July 15, August 8, 1899, IISG-GP.
10. *Le Journal du peuple*, July 18, 1899. *La Petite République*, July 19, 1899.
11. AN, F7 12553, July 29, 1899. APP, B a/1473, July 15, 1899. Péguy in the *Revue blanche*, September 1914.
12. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 425–427. PL to Jules Guesde, July 22, 1899, IISG-GP.
13. Willard, “Chronique historique,” 94.
14. PL to Jules Guesde, July 26, 1900, IISG-GP.
15. PL to Jules Guesde, July 19, 22, 1899, IISG-GP.
16. PL, *Le Socialiste*, July 23, September 17, 1899.
17. *La Petite République*, July 31, 1899.
18. For example, PL to Jules Guesde, June 11, 1898, IISG-GP.
19. PL, *Le Socialisme et la conquête des pouvoirs publics* (Lille, 1899).
20. PL, “Les dernières élections législatives et les partis politiques en France,” *L’Ere nouvelle*, August 1894, 445–458.
21. PL, *Le Socialisme et la conquête des pouvoirs publics*, 17, 21.
22. FE, *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* (New York, 1985), 27. *Le Socialiste*, February 17, 1901.
23. Cited in Fiechter, *Le Socialisme français*, 239.
24. PL to Wilhelm Liebknecht, July 28, 1899, IISG-LP.
25. PL to Wilhelm Liebknecht, September 30, December 1, 1899, IISG-LP. PL to Karl Kautsky, September 15, November 10, 1899, IISG-KP.
26. Noland, *Founding*, 101.
27. *La Petite République*, October 10, 1899. AN, F7 12490, August 9, 12, 1899.
28. PL to Jules Guesde, August 12, 1899, IISG-GP.
29. PL to Wilhelm Liebknecht, September 30, 1899, IISG-LP. PL to Karl Kautsky, November 10, 1899, IISG-KP. PL to Jules Guesde, July 27, 1899, IISG-GP.
30. Derfler, *Alexandre Millerand*, 160.
31. PL, *Le Socialisme et la conquête des pouvoirs publics*, 10–11, 19–21, 25–32. Theodore Lockwood, “French Socialists and Political Responsibilities, 1898–1905” (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1952), 68–69. PL to Jules Guesde, November 26, December 1, 1899, IISG-GP. PL to Karl Kautsky, November 10, 1899, IISG-KP.
32. APP, B a/1620, December 3, 1899. Michelle Perrot and Annie Kriegel, *Le Socialisme et le pouvoir* (1966), 73, 75–76.
33. *Congrès Général des Organisations socialistes français* (1899). Noland, *Founding*, 102–111. APP, B a/1620, December 6, 1899. AN, F7 13072. Derfler, *Alexandre Millerand*, 192–194.
34. Noland, *Founding*, 103–104. Halévy, *Essais*, 28–30. Fiechter, *Le Social-*

- isme français, 217. Charles Rappoport, *Une Vie révolutionnaire*, 1883–1940. *Les mémoires de Charles Rappoport* (1991), 192.
35. LL to Wilhelm Liebknecht, November 16, 1899, IISG-LP.
36. *Congrès Général* (1899), 111–115, 117. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 434–435.
37. LL to Wilhelm Liebknecht, November 16, 1899, IISG-LP. LL to Karl Kautsky, illegible date, 1902, IISG-KP.
38. *Le Petit Sou*, November 12, 1900. Rappoport, *Une Vie révolutionnaire*, 196.
39. *Congrès Général* (1899), 114–115.
40. Noland, *Founding*, 102–111. APP, B a/1620, December 6, 1899.
41. Halévy, *Essais*, 29–41. Noland, *Founding*, 112. Fiechter, *Le Socialisme français*, 81.
42. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 437–438.
43. Perrot, “Les Guesdistes,” 701.

#### 15. *Socialism and the Intellectuals*

1. AN, F7 12496, June 9, 1900.
2. Jean Maitron, *Histoire du mouvement anarchiste en France, 1880–1914* (1951), 282–283.
3. AN, F7 12496, January 12, February 7, 1900. *La Petite République*, March 3, 1900.
4. APP, B a/1135, March 24, 1900.
5. For example, in *Le Socialiste*, February 25, 1900.
6. PL to Karl Kautsky, January 31, May 23, 1899; and LL to Kautsky, October 13, 1904; November 29, 1905, IISG-KP.
7. *La Petite République*, January 22, 1901. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* (New York, 1927), 168–169.
8. *Le Socialiste*, August 12, October 7, 1900. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 446.
9. PL to Jules Guesde, August 12, 21, 1900, IISG-GP. Georges Haupt, *La Deuxième Internationale, 1881–1914* (1964), 171–172.
10. PL to Karl Kautsky, July 11, August 11, 31, 1900, IISG-KP. Kautsky to PL, November 28, 1903, IFHS, 14AS 312.
11. Noland, *Founding*, 125–126. Gustave Rouanet, “Le Congrès de 1900,” *La Revue socialiste* 32 (1900). Helmut Hirsch, “Une Lettre inconnue de Laura Lafargue,” *Economies et Société* 2 (1968), 2535.
12. Dommanget, *Edouard Vaillant*, 196.
13. AN, F7 12498, September 28, 1900. *Deuxième Congrès des organisations socialistes français tenu à Paris, le 28–30 septembre 1900* (1901), 137, 158. Dommanget, *La Chevalerie*, 233.
14. *Dix-neuvième Congrès national du Parti Ouvrier tenu à Roubaix du 15 au 18 septembre 1901* (1901). 1<sup>er</sup> Congrès national du Parti Socialiste de

- France tenu à Commentry les 26, 27, et 28 septembre 1902* (Lille, 1902). *Deuxième Congrès national du Parti Socialiste de France tenu à Reims, 28 et 29 septembre 1903* (Bourges, 1903).
15. PL to Wilhelm Liebknecht, July 25, 1900, IISG-LP.
  16. Published in Paris, by Giard and Brière, 1900. It also appeared in *Cahiers de la quinzaine*, May 5, 1900, 52–76, and as a series in *Le Socialiste* irregularly between April 15 and June 3, 1900. An English version was published in the November 1900 issue of the *International Socialist Review*, from which the following citations are drawn.
  17. PL, *Socialism and the Intellectuals*, 88–91. Gustav Cuengros, “La conférence de Paul Lafargue, ‘Le Socialisme et les intellectuels (1900), sa genèse et son importance pour la littérature française au début du xx siècle,” *Philologica Pragensia* 27 (1984), 149–152.
  18. Stephen Gosch, “Socialism and the Intellectuals, 1890–1914” (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers University, 1992), 51, 148. PL to Karl Kautsky, illegible date, 1902, IISG-KP.
  19. PL, “Les Universités populaires,” *Le Socialiste*, March 11, 1900. Gosch, “Socialism,” 90–92.
  20. PL, *Socialism and the Intellectuals*, 100–101.
  21. Michael Kelly, *Modern French Marxism* (Baltimore, 1982), 14. Maximilien Rubel, *Bibliographie des œuvres de Karl Marx* (1956), cited in Maurice Dommanget, *L’Introduction du marxisme en France* (Lausanne, 1969), 83, 85.
  22. Published by Giard and Brière, Paris, 1903. Perrot, “Les Guesdistes,” 709.
  23. *Le Socialiste*, February 18, October 31, November 7, 1891; February 5, March 12, 1893. PL, *Le Propriété*, 510–511, cited in Willard, “Paul Lafargue et la critique,” 3:190. Yet a recent study of the Guesdists states that Lafargue “never discovered the investment function of capitalists.” Stuart, *Marxism at Work*, 341.
  24. PL, “L’idéal socialiste,” *Le Mouvement socialiste*, September 15, 1903, 81–97. Published as “The Socialist Ideal” in the *International Socialist Review*, November 1903, 286–293.
  25. PL, “The Socialist Ideal,” 91–92. Lafargue did not use the term “hegemony,” but clearly he was anticipating Gramscian notions.
  26. *Le Socialiste*, January 20, 1901.
  27. *Die Neue Zeit* 22 (1903), 124, 25, 780–788, 824–833. Published in France in 1907 as *La Méthode historique de Karl Marx. Le déterminisme économique* and in the same year in the United States as “Marx’s Historical Method,” *International Socialist Review* (October–November 1907). This is probably the origin of the term “economic determinism” as applied to Marx’s ideas.
  28. PL, *La Méthode historique de Karl Marx*, cited in Paul Louis, *Cent cinquante ans de la pensée socialiste. De Marx à Lenine*, 2 vols. (1947), 116.

29. Derfler, *Alexandre Millerand*, 230–245.
30. *La Petite République*, October 2, December 19, 1903. LL to Karl Kautsky, October 8, 1903, IISG-KP.
31. Daniel De Leon, *Flashlights of the Amsterdam Congress* (New York, 1929), 20, 222.
32. Robert Wohl, *French Communism in the Making* (Stanford, 1966), 463.

#### 16. *A Force Retarding Human Progress*

1. Hilden, *Working Women*, 2, 3, 132, 177–178. Claire Moses, *French Feminism in the Nineteenth Century* (Albany, 1984), 193, 224.
2. Marilyn Boxer and Jean H. Quataert, eds., *Socialist Women* (New York, 1978), 75, 79–80, 92. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 362.
3. Hilden, *Working Women*, 4. Boxer, *Socialist Women*, 78, 86. Dick Geary, ed., *Labour and Socialist Movements in Europe Before 1914* (Oxford, 1989), 62, 85.
4. Patricia Hilden, “Rewriting the History of Socialism. Women and the Parti Ouvrier,” *European History Quarterly* 17 (July 1987), 296–300. Sowerwine, *Sisters or Citizens*, 103, 198–200.
5. Léon Gani, “Jules Guesde, Paul Lafargue et les problèmes de population,” *Population* 34 (1979), 1030.
6. Lafargue’s article in *Le Cri du travailleur*, February 9, 1890, cited in Hilden, *Working Women*, 193–194. See also Louis, *Cent cinquante ans*, 119.
7. Hilden, “Rewriting the History of Socialism,” 300; *Working Women*, 193–194, 202, 207–307. One might keep in mind that although these views are considered reactionary by today’s feminists, there existed few alternatives in the nineteenth century to women working outside the home other than factories or workshops with terrible conditions, or domestic service.
8. PL, *La Question de la femme* (1904). An English translation, “The Woman Question,” appeared in the *International Socialist Review* and was republished in *Paul Lafargue, The Right to Be Lazy and Other Studies* (New York, 1973), from which the following citations come.
9. Compare the 1904 pamphlet, for example, with an article on the subject published in *Le Socialiste*, November 14, 1892.
10. Lafargue’s continued tendency to idealize women was most baldly stated in a 1906 article, “La Femme,” *L’Humanité*, August 14, 1906.
11. Drumont cited in A. Zévaès, *De l’Introduction du Marxisme en France* (1947), 148.
12. Sowerwine, *Sisters or Citizens*, 59, 187.
13. PL, “Conjugo,” *Le Socialiste*, June 30–July 7, 1901.
14. Gani, “Jules Guesde, Paul Lafargue,” 1042–1043.

15. PL, "La Charité chrétienne," *Le Mouvement socialiste*, January 15, 1904, 55–96. *Die Neue Zeit*, 23 (1904–1905), I, 75–85, 118–127, 145–153.
16. Paquot, *Les Faiseurs de nuages*, 112–114.
17. PL, "Le Mythe de Prométhée," *La Revue des idées*, December 15, 1904, 921–942.
18. Cohn, 420.
19. Girault, "Le Guesdisme dans l'unité socialiste."
20. Robert P. Baker, "Socialism in the Nord, 1880–1914," *International Review of Social History* 12 (1967), 383. Cohn, 420.
21. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 607.
22. *Histoire générale de la presse française*, vol. 3, *De 1871 à 1940* (1972), 296. Girault, "Le Guesdisme dans l'unité socialiste," 27.
23. Robert Hunter, *Socialism at Work* (New York, 1908), 79. LL to Karl Kautsky, October 3, 1905, IISG-KP.
24. *Le Socialiste*, November 4–11, 11–18, 1905.
25. AN, F7 12485, February 2, 1900. PL to Wilhelm Liebknecht, July 25, 1900, IISG-LP. PL to Jules Guesde, October 11, 1900, IISG-GP. Twenty years before Lafargue had not hesitated to solicit funds from German socialists.
26. AN, F7 12513, October 10, 1903.
27. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 500–504.
28. PL to Jules Guesde, May 31, July 15, 1902, IISG-GP. Cited in Cohn, 338. Zévaès's volume of memoirs, *Notes et souvenirs d'un militant*, first published in 1913, was reprinted fifteen years later as *Ombres et silhouettes, notes et souvenirs* (1928) with all the antiparty passages removed.
29. PL to Karl Kautsky, November 10, 1899, IISG-KP. *Die Neue Zeit* XVII (1898–1899), II, 421–426, 464–473, 488–493, and XVIII (1899–1900), I, 80–86, 106–111, 176–180. PL, *Les Causes de la croyance en Dieu*, in *La Vie socialiste* 10, 11 (March 20, April 5, 1905), 584–601, 611–651. Also in *Die Neue Zeit* 24 (1905–1906), I, 476–480, 508–518, 548–556. An English translation may be found in *Paul Lafargue, Social and Philosophical Studies* (Chicago, 1906).

### 17. The Unperceived Force

1. "Chronique," *Le Mouvement socialiste*, May–June 1906, 188. C. G. Fages, "La Crise socialiste," *Le Mouvement socialiste*, April 15, 1906, 377–389.
2. Parti Socialiste (SFIO), 2<sup>e</sup> Congrès national tenu à Chalon-sur-Saône, les 29, 30, 31 octobre et 1<sup>er</sup> novembre 1905 (n.d.), 188. Noland, *Founding*, 200.

3. Parti Socialiste (SFIO), 4<sup>e</sup> Congrès national, tenu à Nancy les 11, 12, 13 et 14 août 1907. Compte rendu sténographique (n.d.), 180.
4. Cited in Maurice Dommanget, *Hommes et choses de la Commune* (Marseille, 1937), 217–218.
5. Jack D. Ellis, “French Socialist and Syndicalist Approaches to Peace, 1904–1914” (Ph.D. diss., Tulane University, 1967), 135–170, esp. 137. Also see M. R. Scher, “The Antipatriot as Patriot: A Study of the Young Gustave Hervé” (unpublished Ph.D. diss., University of California at Los Angeles, 1972).
6. Claude Willard, *Socialisme et communisme français* (1967), 86.
7. Gordon Wright, *France in Modern Times* (New York, 1995), 256. Lindenberg, *Lucien Herr*, 196. AN, F7 13071, various reports in May 1911.
8. Tony Judt, *Marxism and the French Left* (Oxford, 1986), 118–119.
9. Jacques Julliard, “L’Eternel Guesdisme,” *Critique* 66 (November 1966), 957–958. Baker, “A Regional Study,” 138.
10. Lindenberg, *Lucien Herr*, 197, 198. Michael DeLucia, “The Remaking of French Syndicalism, 1911–1918” (Ph.D. diss., Brown University, 1971), 102. That Jaurès became more militant in his last years is the thesis of Harvey Goldberg, *Jean Jaurès*.
11. Police reports on the POF’s Nantes Congress, September 17, 1894, AN, F7 12490. Cited in Stuart, *Marxism at Work*, 219.
12. Julliard, “L’Eternel Guesdisme,” 954. Winock, “Pour une histoire,” 168.
13. PL, “La Grève générale et le socialisme,” *Le Mouvement socialiste* 137–138 (1904), 71.
14. Rappoport, *Une Vie révolutionnaire*, 180. Sternhell, *Neither Left nor Right*, 54–55. Hubert Lagardelle, *Syndicalisme et socialisme* (1908), 3.
15. Eugène Fournière, *La Crise socialiste* (1908), 263. Paul Lafargue, “L’Action politique et sociale,” *La Revue socialiste* 44 (October 1906), 499, cited in Richard Hostetter, “The Antiwar Policy of the French Socialist Party (SFIO), 1905–1914” (Ph.D. diss., University of California at Berkeley, 1947), 56.
16. PL to Jules Guesde, January 16, 1897, IISG-GP. *L’Humanité*, April 3, 1905.
17. APP, B a/1135, December 23, 1905.
18. *Le Temps*, January 27, 1905. *L’Humanité*, January 25, 31, February 1–3, 1905. A. Z. Manfred, “La Révolution russe de 1905–1907 et le mouvement révolutionnaire en France,” *Recherches soviétiques* 5 (September–October 1956), 161–168. M.-J. Domivitch, “Le Débat de la Révolution de 1905 et le mouvement de solidarité en France” (originally in *Voprossi Historii*), *Cahiers du communisme* 31 (April 1955), 461–475.
19. *L’Humanité*, March 26, 1905.
20. Helena Makarenkova, “Paul Lafargue and his Russian Correspondents” (in Russian), *Annuaire d’études françaises* 2 (1976), 131–142. Jacques Girault, “Les Conséquences de la révolution russe de 1905 sur le social-

- isme français: l'exemple de Paul Lafargue," in 1905. *La Première Révolution russe. Colloque international* (1981), 433, 434.
21. *L'Humanité*, October 29, 1905, cited in Lauridsen, "Revolution in Russia," 93.
  22. *Le Socialiste*, March 26–April 2, December 16–23, 1905, cited in Lauridsen, "Revolution in Russia," 117.
  23. *L'Humanité*, August 5, 1907.
  24. Parti Socialiste, 3<sup>e</sup> Congrès national SFIO tenu à Limoges le 4 novembre 1906. *Compte rendu analytique* (n.d.), 164–165. *La Revue socialiste* 44 (July 1906), 263.
  25. Parti Socialiste, 4<sup>e</sup> Congrès national SFIO tenu à Nancy les 11, 12, 13 et 14 août 1902. *Compte rendu analytique* (n.d.). Lauridsen, "Revolution in Russia," 151–152.
  26. *Le Socialiste*, March 26–April 2, 1905.
  27. *Le Mouvement socialiste* (November 1906), 295. Alexandre Zévaès, *Le Socialisme en 1912* (1912), 40.
  28. Gani, "Jules Guesde, Paul Lafargue," 1033, 1034.
  29. *Le Socialiste*, October 21–28, December 2–9, 1905; December 30, 1905–January 5, 1906. Published as a pamphlet in Paris (1906) and republished in 1913. FE to Friedrich Sorge, December 2, 1887, MEW, 36:174.
  30. Parti Socialiste, 4<sup>e</sup> Congrès national, 195, 201.
  31. *Ibid.*, 198. Also see L. Gravereaux, "Les Discussions sur le patriotisme et le militarisme dans les congrès socialistes" (thèse de droit, Paris, 1913), 94–97.
  32. Lefranc, *Le Mouvement socialiste*, 160–195.
  33. Parti Socialiste, 4<sup>e</sup> Congrès national, 199–205.
  34. Derfler, *Paul Lafargue*, 35, 102. *Le Socialiste*, June 18–25, 1905. *L'Humanité*, January 15, 1907.
  35. *La Revue socialiste*, December 15, 1911, 481–483.
  36. Cited in Girault, "Les Conséquences," 432.
  37. *L'Humanité*, April 3, 1909. Parti Socialiste, 3<sup>e</sup> Congrès national, cited in Girault, "Les Conséquences," 433.
  38. PL, "La CGT et le Parti Socialiste," *L'Humanité*, August 5, 1907.
  39. PL, "La Révolution sociale," *L'Humanité*, December 5, 1908.

#### 18. *One Reform on Top of Another*

1. LL to Luise Kautsky, December 19, 1905, IISG-KP.
2. Derfler, *Alexandre Millerand*, 51.
3. Paul Detot, *Le Socialisme devant les chambres françaises*, 1893–1898 (1902), 62. Derfler, *Alexandre Millerand*, 56.
4. APP, B a/223, Elections législatives de mai 1906. B a/1135, December 12, 1905.



5. APP, B a/1135, February 24, 1906.
6. *Le Socialiste*, February 3–10, 1906.
7. The Sûreté apparently agreed. AN, F12 544, February 23, 1906.
8. APP, B a/223, February 23, 1906.
9. Paul Gagnon, *France Since 1789* (New York, 1964), 274–275.
10. Jacques Julliard, *Clemenceau, briseur des grèves* (1965), 36–43.
11. *Le Réveil social*, June 6, 1908. AN, F7 12197, Report of the Procureur of the Republic.
12. Julliard, *Clemenceau*, 55–68.
13. Lefranc, *Le Mouvement socialiste*, 162–163.
14. Fiechter, *Le Socialisme français*, 163.
15. Derfler, *Paul Lafargue*, 140–141. *L'Action directe*, January 15, 22, February 4, 12, 22, 1908, for the exchange. *Le Socialiste*, February 23–30, 1908. APP, B a/1135, October 8, 1911. Jean-Luis Guereña, *Paul Lafargue en España. Una Polémica en 1908* (Barcelona, 1979).
16. Parti Socialiste (SFIO), 5<sup>e</sup> Congrès national tenu à Toulouse les 15, 16, 17 et 18 octobre 1908. *Compte rendu sténographique*, (n.d.), 134. See J. Delevsky, *Les Antimonies socialistes et l'évolution du socialisme français* (1930), 414–415.
17. Parti Socialiste, 5<sup>e</sup> Congrès national, 134, 137–138.
18. *Ibid.*, 135–136.
19. *Ibid.*, 134.
20. Georges Lefranc, *Visages du mouvement ouvrier français* (1982), 44–45. Wohl, *French Communism*, 12.
21. Cited in A. Dessous, ed., introduction to *Paul Lafargue, Le Droit à la paresse*, 7.
22. Girault, “Le Guesdisme dans l’unité socialiste,” 167.
23. Parti Socialiste, 5<sup>e</sup> Congrès national, 482.
24. Noland, *Founding*, 201.
25. *Ibid.*, 202. Pierre Deyon, “Le Cinquantenaire de l’unité socialiste,” *Cahiers internationaux* 67 (June 1955), 76.
26. Parti Socialiste, 5<sup>e</sup> Congrès national, 299–300.
27. In her memoirs, Krupskaya indicates 1910. In his memoirs, Rappoport said he went to Draveil to arrange a meeting after the SFIO’s Saint-Quentin Congress, which was held in April 1911. Rappoport, *Une Vie révolutionnaire*, 280. See the discussion in Freville, *Lénine à Paris*, 202.
28. “Paul Lafargue,” *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, 3rd. ed., Engl. tr. (New York, 1977), 14:167–168.
29. David Shub, *Lenin. A Biography* (Middlesex, 1966), 25. Ana Ortega, “Apuntes sobre Pablo Lafargue,” *Santiago* 13–14 (December 1973–March 1974), 252. *Le Socialiste*, November 4–11, 1908. *L'Humanité*, April 3, 1908.
30. Shub, *Lenin*, 132, 134.

31. Freville, *Lénine à Paris*, 202, 205. Tchernoff, *Dans le Creuset*, 136–137. Wohl, *French Communism*, 170n.
32. N. Kroupskaia, *Ma Vie avec Lénine*, 1893–1917 (1933), 140–141.
33. V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, 2nd rev. ed., vol. 8, *January–July*, 1905 (Moscow, 1965), 82, 471.
34. Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 21 (New York, 1927), 281.
35. Bertram Wolfe, *Three Who Made a Revolution* (Boston, 1948), 512.
36. PL, “Le Problème de la connaissance,” *Revue des idées*, December 15, 1910, 426–444. Republished as a pamphlet, n.d.
37. *La Revue socialiste*, October 1901, 489. *Le Socialiste*, August 11–18, 1901. Derfler, *Alexandre Millerand*, 200–202.
38. *Le Petit Sou*, 1901, passim. *Le Socialiste*, February 3, 1906.
39. *Le Socialiste*, February 3–10, 1906.
40. *Le Socialisme*, April 9, 16, 23, 1910. Cohn, 432.
41. Parti Socialiste (SFIO), 7<sup>e</sup> Congrès national tenu à Nîmes les 6, 7, 8 février 1910. *Compte rendu sténographique* (n.d.), 290–304. AN, F7 13070, February 9, 1911.
42. PL to Jules Guesde, January 5, 1910, IISG-GP. PL to Bracke, January 5, 1910, Nicolaevsky Papers, Hoover Institute Archives, box 623, folder 18.
43. Jolyon Howorth, *Edouard Vaillant. La création de l’unité socialiste en France* (1982), 163–164. Parti Socialiste, 7<sup>e</sup> Congrès national, 302.
44. Goldberg, *Jean Jaurès*, 406.
45. *L’Humanité*, May 17, 24, June 2, 5, 15, July 16, 1911.
46. *La Revue socialiste* 43 (1906), 210, 212, 619. Parti Socialiste, 7<sup>e</sup> Congrès national, 487–489. Noland, *Founding*, 202–203.
47. Madeleine Rébérioux, “Party Practice and the Jaurésian Vision: The SFIO (1905–1914),” in Stuart Williams, ed., *Socialism in France. From Jaurès to Mitterrand* (New York, 1983), 19.
48. LL to Karl Kautsky, August 2, December 17, 1910, IISG-KP.
49. Parti Socialiste (SFIO), 7<sup>e</sup> Congrès national tenu à Paris les 15 et 16 juillet 1910 (2<sup>e</sup> session). *Compte rendu sténographique* (n.d.), 105.
50. Roger Magraw, “France,” in Dick Geary, *Labour and Socialist Movements in Europe Before 1914* (London, 1989), 70.
51. AN, F7 12496, April 28, May 25, 1909.
52. Marcel Cachin, *Carnets*, 1906–1916 (1993).
53. APP, B a/1135, November 23, 1907. Cohn, 440.
54. Charles Bonnier to Jules Guesde, cited in Willard, “Paul Lafargue et la critique,” 3:188.
55. Lefranc, *Le Mouvement socialiste*, 433.
56. Parti Socialiste (SFIO), 8<sup>e</sup> Congrès national (2<sup>e</sup> session) tenu à Paris les 1<sup>er</sup> et 2 novembre 1911. *Compte rendu analytique* (n.d.), 59–60.
57. Parti Socialiste, 6<sup>e</sup> Congrès national, 165–166. Parti Socialiste, 7<sup>e</sup> Congrès national, 385–386.

58. LL to Karl Kautsky, March 3, 1911, IISG-KP.
59. *L'Humanité*, August 19, 1911. Parti Socialiste (SFIO), 8<sup>e</sup> Congrès national tenu à Saint-Quentin les 16, 17, 18 et 19 avril 1911. *Compte rendu sténographique* (n.d.), 389–392, 462–464. For Rappoport's argument, see *Une vie révolutionnaire*, 274–279.
60. Parti Socialiste, 8<sup>e</sup> Congrès national tenu à Saint-Quentin, 389. Parti Socialiste, 7<sup>e</sup> Congrès national, 120. Jean Maitron, *Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement ouvrier français*, 1864–1871, (Paris, 1964), 452.
61. Marcel Cachin, *Ecrits et portraits* (1964), 59. Lagardelle, “Pablo Lafargue,” 7. Léon Blum, “Mémoires de Marx Dormoy,” *Le Populaire*, November 29, 1936.
62. Parti Socialiste, 8<sup>e</sup> Congrès national (2<sup>e</sup> session) tenu à Paris, 60. Cohn, 445.
63. AN, F7 13072, November 3, 1911.
64. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*, 465–475.

### 19. *Simply . . . Logical*

1. PL to Karl Kautsky, March 3, 1911, IISG-KP.
2. Freville, *Lénine à Paris*, 206. *L'Humanité*, November 28, 1911.
3. *L'Humanité*, November 28, 1911. “Souvenirs de Gabriel Deville et de Lucien Roland,” IFHS, Dommanget Papers, cited in Maurice Dommanget, ed., *Paul Lafargue, Le Droit à la paresse* (1970), 100, 185–186.
4. *Le Populaire*, December 2, 1936.
5. “Souvenirs,” cited in Dommanget, ed., *Paul Lafargue*, 101.
6. Of the 796 suicides in Paris in 1911 (there were 9,629 in all of France), 112 were carried out by poison. Walter A. Lee, “Suicides in France, 1910–1948,” *American Journal of Sociology* 52 (1946–1947), 322, 329. Hydrocyanide (or hydrocyanic) acid was then also known as prussic acid.
7. PL to FE, November 19, 1890, ELC, 2:240.
8. Text in *L'Humanité*, November 27, 1911, and *Le Socialiste*, December 3–10, 1911.
9. In contrast to individual suicides, it is not unusual in suicide pacts for great care to be taken by the deceased to cope with problems created by their deaths. Copious notes are frequently left, and, unlike individual suicides, death comes as a great surprise to others: there is seldom a history of previous attempts, and the attempt is usually successful. John Cohen, “A Study of Suicide Pacts,” in Anthony Giddens, ed., *The Sociology of Suicide. A Selection of Readings* (London, 1971), 356.
10. Zévaès, *Notes*, 132; *Ombres*, 187–188.
11. Bernstein, “Paul Lafargue,” 20.
12. Karl Marx to FE, August 7, 1866, MECW, 42:304.
13. Dommanget, ed., *Paul Lafargue*, 101. Longuet, *Karl Marx*, 244.

14. Ernest Belfort Bax, *Reminiscences and Reflexions of a Mid and Late Victorian* (London, 1918), 131.
15. *L'Humanité*, Nord ed., September 17, 1911. Also *Le Travailleur du Nord*, September 30, October 28, 1911. AN, F7 13069, all cited in Baker, "A Regional Study," 224–226.
16. *Le Socialiste*, November 17–24, 1907.
17. AN, F7 13070, several reports, especially that of December 9, 1911.
18. AN, F7 13070, August 9, September 6, 14, 1911.
19. AN, F7 13070, October 23, 24, 25, 26, November 3, 1911.
20. There is no need to enter the half-century academic debate in the literature on suicide between those favoring a sociological explanation (Durkheim) and those favoring a psychological one (those in a Freudian tradition). Suicidologists today would agree that the social isolation that often accompanies suicide can be a cause or a consequence of depression and loneliness. Put another way, social isolation is a powerful stimulus, but it is also true that victims create their own society. Alfred Alvarez, *The Savage God. A Study of Suicide* (New York, 1972), 96–97. See the discussion by David Cannadine in his review of Olive Anderson's *Suicide in Victorian and Edwardian England* (London, 1987) in the *New York Review of Books*, June 16, 1988, 13–14, 16.
21. Jean Baechler, *Suicides* (New York, 1979), 70. Moreover, with the greater availability of poisons, suicide became less violent, less like murdering oneself. Neal Kessel, "Self-Poisoning," in Edwin S. Schneideman and Norman Farberow, eds., *Clues to Suicide* (New York, 1957), 346.
22. David Lester, *Why People Kill Themselves* (Springfield, Ill., 1972), 325–326.
23. Compère-Morel, *Jules Guesde*, 477–478.
24. V. Daline, "On the Differences Between Paul Lafargue and Jules Guesde" (in Russian) (Moscow, 1964), cited in Dommanget, ed., *Paul Lafargue*, 103–104.
25. L. Roland, "Souvenirs," cited in Dommanget, ed., *Paul Lafargue*, 104.
26. Edmund Pelvso, "Un Dimanche chez la fille de Karl Marx," *Bulletin Communiste* (n.d.), 550, cited in Dommanget, ed., *Paul Lafargue*, 104. Sembat in *L'humanité*, November 29, 1911.
27. *Le Socialiste*, December 10–17, 1911. PL, *La Revue socialiste*, December 15, 1911, 481–483.
28. Parti Socialiste, 8<sup>e</sup> Congrès national tenu à Saint-Quentin, 59–60.
29. *L'Humanité*, November 29, 1911. *Le Socialiste*, December 3–10, 1911.
30. *Le Populaire*, December 2, 1936. Louis Aragon, *The Bells of Basle* (New York, 1936), 225–227.
31. *L'Humanité*, November 28, 1911.
32. Drumont cited in Lagardelle, "Pablo Lafargue," 13. PL to FE, April 14, 1889, ELC, 2:222.

33. Bax, *Reminiscences*, 132.
34. Zévaès, *Ombres*, 187; *Notes*, 130–131. Henry Hyndman, *Further Reminiscences* (London, 1912), 147. Hubert Lagardelle, “Paul Lafargue,” *Revue hebdomadaire*, January 13, 1912, 185–198.
35. Saul Padover, *Karl Marx. An Intimate Biography* (New York, 1978), 506.
36. Lagardelle, “Pablo Lafargue,” 7. Other reactions in William Cohn’s untitled and unpublished draft manuscript on Lafargue’s suicide, 4. I am indebted to Professor Cohn for sharing this with me.
37. Bernstein, “Paul Lafargue,” 21.
38. Bebel cited in Zévaès, *Ombres*, 186–187. Kautsky cited in *L’Humanité*, November 30, 1911. Talamini and Anseele cited in Dommanget, ed., *Paul Lafargue*, 108.
39. *Die Neue Zeit*, December 8, 1911.
40. *The Daily People*, November 28, 1911.
41. Krupskaya, *Ma Vie*, 164. Gopner cited in *Lénine tel qu’il fut. Souvenirs de contemporains* (Moscow, 1958), 587, and referred to in Salvador Morales, “Pablo y Laura Lafargue,” 71.
42. Leon Trotsky, “Jaurès,” *Bulletin communiste* 47 (November 23, 1923), 849. Both comments cited in Dommanget, ed., *Paul Lafargue*, 110.
43. Keir Hardie, “The Burial of Lafargue,” *Labour Leader*, December 8, 1911.
44. Aragon, *Bells*, 246.
45. Tchernoff, *Dans le Creuset*, 137.
46. APP, B a/1135, November 29, 1911.
47. APP, B a/1135. *Le Temps*’s estimate was fifteen thousand. *L’Humanité*, December 3, 1911.
48. PL to FE, February 27, 1885, ELC, 1:268.
49. Freville, *Lénine à Paris*, 209.
50. Aragon, *Bells*, 248.
51. *L’Humanité*, December 11, 1911. APP, B a/1135, December 3, 1911.
52. J. Vidal, *Le Mouvement ouvrier français de la Commune à la guerre mondiale* (1934), 137, 140, 145. Krupskaya, *Ma Vie*, 164. Lenin’s eulogy was published in *Le Dimanche social*, December 21–28, 1911, cited in Dommanget, ed., *Paul Lafargue*, 114–115.
53. Aragon, *Bells*, 251. Freville, *Lénine à Paris*, 211.

### Afterword

1. The story is found in an undated clipping from *Liberté* in the Dommanget Papers, IFHS, 14AS 349. Freville, *Lénine à Paris*, 212.
2. Jean Longuet to Karl Kautsky, December 7, 1911; February 19, 1913, IISG-KP.
3. Cachin had replaced Lafargue on the editorial board of *L’Humanité*. The

- monument no longer stands, perhaps taken down during the Vichy regime. Cachin, *Ecrits et portraits*, 52. Stolz, *Paul Lafargue, théoricien*. G. Varlet, *Paul Lafargue, théoricien militant du socialisme* (1937). Freville, ed., *Paul Lafargue*. V. Hoffenschefer, *Pol Lafarg. Praktik Marksistkoi Kritiki* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1933).
4. Bruhat, "Paul Lafargue," 65–76.
  5. Fritz Keller, "Stalinism vs. Hedonism. Notes on the (non-)publication of Paul Lafargue's works in the so-called socialist countries," unpublished manuscript. I am grateful to Mr. Keller for sharing his draft with me.
  6. *Pol' Lafarg: Soc (Works)*, 1–3 (Moscow, 1925–1931); *Pamfelty (Pamphlets)* (Moscow, 1931); *Literaturno-kriticheskie stat'i (Essays of Literary Criticism)* (Moscow, 1936); *Religiia i kapital (Religion of Capital)* (Moscow, 1937); *The Great Soviet Encyclopedia* (Moscow, 1953), 14:369, cited in Keller, "Stalinism," 2.
  7. K. N. Momdzhian, *Lafarg i nekotorye voprosy marksistskoi teorii (Lafargue and Some Questions of Marxist Theory)* (Yervan, 1954), and *Pol' Lafarg: Za i protiv kommunizma (For and Against Communism)* (Moscow, 1959). V. Hoffenschefer, *Iz istorii marksistskoi kritiki: P. Lafarg bor'ba za realizm (From the History of Marxist Criticism: Lafargue and the Struggle for Realism)* (Moscow, 1967). V. M. Dalin, "Bylo li gediskoe napravlenie edinyim (Is There a General Line in Guesde's Position?)" in *Liudi i idei (Men and Ideas)* (Moscow, 1970).
  8. The English version of the *Encyclopedia* was published in New York in 1977 (vol. 14, 167–168). Aside from his correspondence, much of which is now available elsewhere, and his own writings, the Russian historians who have written on Lafargue have tended to base their accounts on (largely French) secondary sources. A short biography, *Lafargue*, was published by Ivan A. Boldyrev, (Moscow, 1984). Page 170 contains a bibliography. Articles include V. H. Balmashnov, "Freidk Engels i Pol' Lafarg (Freidrich Engels and Paul Lafargue)," *Novaia i Noveisaia Istoria* 1 (1976), 79–92, which is based on the Engels-Lafargues correspondence; E. M. Makarenkova, "Molodoi Lafarg (The Young Lafargue)," *Voprosy Istorii* 6 (1981), 115–122, and "Lafarg i Sozdaniye Marksistskoy Rabochey Parti Frantsyi (Unpublished Writings: Paul Lafargue and the Creation of the Marxist Workers Party of France)," *Voprosy Istorii* 11 (1978), 116–127. She also published an article on Lafargue's antitsarist efforts before and after the Russian Revolution of 1905, "Pervaia Russkaia Revoliutsiia i Lafarrg," *Voprosy Istorii* 11 (1975), 213–215; an article on "Paul Lafargue and his Russian Correspondents" (in Russian), *Annuaire d'études françaises* (1974), 131–142; and a biography of Lafargue (1985). I. A. Bakh, ed., "Neopublikovannye Pisma Laury Lafarg i Zhenni Longe Karlu Marksu (Unpublished Letters of Laura Lafargue and Jenny Longuet to Karl Marx)," *Novaia i Noveisaia Istoria* 3 (1983), 3–10; and

- the original Russian version of the Novikova article mentioned below, “Bordoskaia Seiksita i Internacionala vo Vremia Franko-Prusskoi Voiny i Parizkof Kommuny,” *Novaia i Noveisaia Istoria* 2 (1961), 74–88.
9. Morales, “Pablo y Laura Lafargue,” 68–71; “Primeros años en la vida de Pablo Lafargue,” *Santiago* 21 (1946), 73–100. His collection of Lafargue’s writings is referred to above. Ortega, “Apuntes sobre Pablo Lafargue,” 241–255. Raul Roa, “Evocación de Pablo Lafargue,” *Cuba Socialista* 6 (February 1962), 56–83. Michel Robert, “Lafargue: el yerno cubano de Marx,” *Bohemia* 67 (January 31, 1975), 8–9. Morawski, “Pablo Lafargue,” 25–37. Aída Mesa Martínez, “Paul Lafargue,” *Bohemia* 65 (November 23, 1973), 107. G. P. Novikova, “Pablo Lafargue y la Primera Internacional,” *Instituto de Historia. Serie Temas Sociales* 2 (May 1969). PL, *La Légende de Victor Hugo* (Havana, 1942).
  10. See especially Sorel’s *La Décomposition du Marxisme*. McInnes, “Les Débuts du marxisme.”
  11. Kolakowski, *Main Currents*, 2:141. McInnes, “Les Débuts du marxisme,” 25.
  12. As of 1977. Willard, “Paul Lafargue et la critique,” 3:183, 184.
  13. Willard, *Les Guesdistes*. Girault, *Paul Lafargue*. Jean Maitron, ed., *Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement ouvrier français, 3<sup>e</sup> partie, De la Commune à la grande guerre, 1871–1914* (1964–), 13:167–170; Cohn. Gorilovics, *La Légende de Victor Hugo*. Dommanget, ed., *Paul Lafargue*.
  14. Willard, “Paul Lafargue. Critique littéraire,” 102–110. Fayolle, “Paul Lafargue,” 117–127, 161–171. Madeleine Rébérioux, “Critique littéraire et socialisme. Présentation,” *Le Mouvement social* (April–June 1967), 3–28, and “Avant-garde esthétique,” 21–39. Roger Fayolle, *Manuel d’histoire littéraire de France*, vol. 5, 1848–1913 (1977), 496–506.
  15. Willard, “Paul Lafargue et la critique,” 3:184.
  16. Cited in Bruhat, “Paul Lafargue,” 71.
  17. Madeleine Rébérioux, “Le Guesdisme,” *Société d’études jaurésiennes, Bulletin* 50 (July–September 1973), 9.
  18. C. G. Gages, “La Crise socialiste,” *Le Mouvement socialiste*, April 15, 1906, 377–389. Also the issue of May–June 1906, 188.
  19. Wayne Westergard-Thorpe, “Revolutionary Syndicalist Internationalism, 1913–1931: The Origin of the International Workingmen’s Association” (Ph.D. diss., University of British Columbia, 1979), cited in Susan Milner, *The Dilemmas of Internationalism. French Syndicalists and the International Labor Movement, 1900–1914* (New York, 1970), 223.
  20. See, for example, the criticism of Edouard Berth, “Les Derniers Aspects du socialisme,” *Nouveaux Aspects du socialisme* (1923), 43.
  21. Jolyon Howorth, cited in Williams, ed., *Socialism in France*, 18, 19. Winock, “Pour une histoire,” 166.

- 
22. Lichtheim, *Marxism in Modern France*, 9.
  23. Winock, "Pour une histoire," 174–175.
  24. Lichtheim, *Marxism in Modern France*, 70.
  25. Annie Kriegel, *Aux Origines du communisme français, 1914–1920*, 2 vols. (1964), 2:812–862. Berth, "Les Derniers Aspects," 43.
  26. Steenson, *After Marx*, 26–27.
  27. See the comments on Lafargue by G. Chinard, *L'Amérique et le rêve exotique dans la littérature française au XVII<sup>e</sup> et au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (1934), cited in Perrot, "Les Guesdistes," 708.
  28. Perrot, "Les Guesdistes," 709.
  29. Willard, "Chronique historique," 100; "Paul Lafargue et la critique," 3:199.
  30. Lindenberg, *Le Marxisme introuvable*, 58.
  31. Engels to Mme Wischnewetzky, January 27, 1887, cited in Louis, *Cent cinquante ans*, vol. 1, *De Marx à Lénine* (1939), 109.





# Index

- Adam, Juliette, 42–43  
 Allier Department, 5–6, 39  
 Amiens Charter, 260–261, 265  
 Andler, Charles, 193–194  
 Aragon, Louis, 294–295, 299  
 Aveling, Edward, 57, 159–160, 169
- Bebel, August, 296  
 Beer, Max, 156–157  
 Bernstein, Eduard, 46–47, 212, 296  
 Berth, Edouard, 252  
 Block, Maurice, 28  
 Blum, Léon, 209  
 Bonnet, Alfred, 174  
 Boulanger, Georges, 57–59, 60–61, 62–63, 64, 66  
 Bracke, Alexandre, 254, 276, 299–300  
 Briand, Aristide, 116, 117, 234, 283  
 Brousse, Paul, 25, 74, 214, 217. *See also* Broussists  
 Broussists, 39, 53, 70–72, 74–75, 78  
 Brunellière, Charles, 115, 117, 202, 217  
 Buré, Emile, 252
- Cachin, Marcel, 255, 286, 305  
 Casimir-Périer, Jean, 146, 151  
 Chevalerie du Travail Français, 56, 201–203  
 Clemenceau, Georges, 271–272  
 Compère-Morel, Adéodat, 126, 277, 305  
 Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT), 121–122, 260–261, 269  
 Croce, Benedetto, 175, 192  
 Culine, Hippolyte, 89–90, 91, 92, 93, 94–95
- Decazeville strike, 48, 49–50  
 DeLeon, Daniel, 243  
 Delory, Gustave, 201  
 Demuth, Freddy, 107  
*Le Devenir social*, 161, 174–175  
 Deville, Gabriel, 9, 11, 60, 61, 125–126, 206; *Capital*, abridgment of, 17–18, 23–24; and POF, 79; Lafargue, support from, 139–140; and *Le Devenir social*, 174; and *L'Ere nouvelle*, 323.  
 Diamandy, Georges, 169  
 Dommanget, Maurice, 202–203  
 Dormoy, Jean, 10, 13  
 Dormoy, Marx, 156–157, 210, 212  
 Dramas, Paul, 252  
 Draveil strike, 272–273  
 Drumont, Edouard, 250, 295
- L'Egalité*, 17, 25  
 Engels, Friedrich: Lafargue, criticism of, 6–7, 16, 22–23, 46, 101–102, 106; German socialists, giving priority to, 18, 65, 87; *The Origin of the Family*, 34–36; electoral analysis, 39–40, 82; parliamentary labor coalition, hailing of, 48–49; Lafargue's trial, reaction to, 52; Boulangism, view of, 58–59, 62–63, 66–67, 109, 139–140; Second International, founding of, 71–73, 75; and Lafargue's election to Chamber, 95, 99; Lafargue's speaking tours, worries about, 109, 112–114, 140, 142; socialist electoral strategies, view of, 110–111; on the general strike, 120; POF's agrarian program, condemnation of, 130–132, 133; POF's patriot-

- Engels, Friedrich (*continued*)  
 ism, view of, 137; Jaurès and Millerand, fretting over rise of, 150–151; workload, description of, 153; death of, 154; on Lafargue's biblical criticism, 172; preoccupation with Marx's surplus value theory, 192  
*L'Ere nouvelle*, 161, 169–170
- Fédération du Nord, 265  
 Fédération Nationale des Bourses du Travail, 120–121  
 Fourmies, 87, 88  
 French section of the Workers' International (SFIO), 243–244, 253; Chalon Congress (1905), 264; Limoges Congress (1906), 265, 268; Nancy Congress (1907), 265–266, 267; Saint-Etienne Congress (1909), 276–277; Nîmes Congress (1910), 280; Paris Congress (1910), 282–283; Toulouse Congress (1908), 284–285; Saint-Quentin Congress (1911), 285–286, 294; Paris Congress (2nd session, 1911), 286–287; subsequent history of, 306–308
- General strike, 120, 121–122  
 Gerault-Richard, Léon, 200  
 Guesde, Jules, 12, 13–14, 49–50, 83, 103–104, 108, 125–126; neutrality in Boulanger and Dreyfus affairs, urging of, 61–62, 65, 208–209; and electoral strategies, 79, 81, 205; physical appearance of, 85; Lafargue's candidacy, support of, 97; on patriotism, 111–112; elections to Chamber, 142, 261; and reformism, 144, 196, 259–260, 306; and socialist unification, 207, 211–212; Millerand's entry, opposition to, 216, 217; frustration over defeat, 218–219; debate with Jaurès, 222; and the “woman question,” 245; syndicalism, opposition to, 265, 265–266; health and financial problems of, 277, 393; structural change in SFIO, argument for, 286–287; Lafargue's suicide, reaction to, 293; resentment of Jaurès and Independents, 384. *See also* Guesdists
- Guesdists, 39–40, 70, 199–200. *See also* Parti Ouvrier Français
- Hardie, Keir, 298  
 Herr, Lucien, 194  
 Hervé, Gustave, 259–260  
*L'Humanité*, 254, 263, 264, 283–287  
 Hyndman, Henry, 295–296
- International Workingmen's Association (IWMA), 69–77, 197–199, 207, 233–234, 243
- Japy Congress, 225–227, 228  
 Jaurès, Jean, 48, 129, 146–147, 206, 207; Millerand, support of, 214, 216–217, 220; and socialist unity, 223; Lafargue, criticism of, 231; and reformism, 253–254, 305–306; renewed militancy of, 261–262; pension bill, defense of, 281–282; Lafargue's suicide, reaction to, 295; at Lafargue's funeral, 300
- Kautsky, Karl, 34, 130, 134, 163–164, 172–173, 296  
 Krupskaya, 277, 278
- Labriola, Antonio, 169–170, 175  
 Lafargue, Ana (Paul's mother), 84, 212  
 Lafargue, Laura, 7–8, 12–13, 29, 50, 115, 144–145, 238, 290; defense of Paul, 101, 107; and Marx's papers, 153–154; Bernstein, hostility to, 231; and feminism, 250
- Lafargue, Paul: loss of job, 4; and Russia, 4; and anarchism, 5, arrest and trial of, 5, 6–7, 8–9, 9–11; relationship with mother, 9, 51; in Sainte-Pélagie prison, 11–13, 16, 30–31; on Darwinism, 13, 15; on the 1880 POF Program, 13, 14–15; on the French Revolution, 13–14; American grain production, study of, 15–16, 22–23;

lectures, delivery of, 20–21, 30; on Marx's economic materialism, 21–22; ironic writing, example of, 22–23; Engels's editorial aid, request for, 27–28, 41; on social Darwinism, 29, 189; essay on Hugo, 31–34, 161, 164–165; Engels's *The Origin of the Family*, influence of, 36; on the evolution of morality, 36–37; physical description and health of, 37, 41, 56–57, 115, 254; socialist electoral union, seeking of, 38–39; as candidate in the Allier Department, 39–40; poor speaking ability of, 41, 54, 106–107; on religion and capitalism, 41–42; desire to publish in prestigious journals, 42–45; Leroy-Beaulieu, refutation of, 43; reputation within socialist ranks, 47; candidacy for Paris Municipal Council, consideration of, 47, 104–105; the nation, view of, 49; parliamentary strategies, embrace of, 49–50, 197; charge of incitement to pillage, 50–52; postrevolutionary era, speculation on, 52–53, 240–241; the state, view of, 53; La Chevalerie du Travail Français, membership in, 56, 201, 202–203; Engels's financial help, request for, 57; theater critic, seeking role as, 57; and Boulangism, 57–68; and founding of Second International, 69–77; and May Day, 78, 83; as candidate in 1889 election to Chamber, 79–81; POF foreign secretary, appointment as, 83; medical advances, interest in, 83; efforts to earn money, 84; Guesde, relationship with, 84–85, 144–145, 203–204, 217–218, 219–220, 254–255, 255–256, 256, 259, 262, 269, 283–287, 292; and shooting at Fourmies, 87–91; subsequent arrest and trial of, 91–95; Zola's *L'Argent*, review of, 95, 165–168; run for Chamber in “national plebiscite,” 95–97; election to parliament, 97–98, 100; on task of socialist legislators, 103; as deputy, 103–115, 140–141; speaking

tours while deputy, 106–107, 109, 142; parliamentary activity, view of, 108, 111; German social democrats, praise for, 113; and Panama scandal, 113, 115; socialist unity, work for, 114, 139, 197, 208; Millerand and Jaurès, view of, 115, 150–151; debate with Abbé Naudet, 117–118; on general strike, 120; and agrarian program, 123, 124, 125–127, 127–129, 132, 277; Franco-Russian alliance, view of, 136; and anti-Semitism, 137–138, 208; a typical speech of, 140; defeat in 1893 election, 142–144; as *Vorwärts* correspondent, replacing Guesde, 144; cessation of political activism, 145–146, 160, 211, 212; Jaurèsian idealism, battles with, 146–150; Lenin, meeting with, 152; Engels's funeral, attendance at, 155; house in Draveil, 155–157; wealth of, 158, 297; candidacy for Paris Council, rejection of, 158–159, 204; plans to write novel, 160–161; bourgeois cultural values, rejection of, 163–164; Daudet's *Sappho*, review of, 164–165; and *L'Ere nouvelle*, 169, 170; and Biblical criticism, 170–172; on the “immaculate conception,” 173; on the origins of romanticism, 175–176; histories of French literature, absence from, 177; application of Marxist analysis, 177–181; on property, 182–187; on Campanella, 188–189; Pareto, reply to, 189; on the Bourse (stock market), 190–191; Marx's surplus value theory, defense of, 191–192, 194; IWMA's London Congress, attendance at, 197, 198, 202–203; in Marxist seizure of *La Petite République*, 200–201; and 1898 election, 203–204; neutrality in Dreyfus affair, opposition to, 207–208, 209–211; return to party activism, 212, 219–220; Millerand's entry, condemnation of, 213, 214, 216, 218–219, 224–225, 226–227, 232–233, 235;

- Lafargue, Paul (*continued*)  
 personal criticism of Jaurès, denial of, 217–218; return to a revolutionary stance, 219, 222–224, 243–244; socialism and the conquest of public power, view of, 221–222; Jaurès, hostility to, 226–227, 236–237; Bernstein's revisionism, criticism of, 231, 407–408; pension bill, opposition to, 232, 279–282; Kautsky, break with, 233; Briand, hostility to, 234; on socialism and intellectuals, 235–238; on American trusts, 238–240; on “economic determinism,” 242; on the “woman question,” 246–251; on Christian charity, 252–253; on the Prometheus legend, 253; and *L'Humanité*, 254; party tactics, defeat on, 255; on origin of abstract ideas, 257–258; Hervé, support of, 259–260, 286; revolutionary syndicalism, defense of, 262–263, 266, 267–268, 269, 274–275, 276; and the 1905 Revolution, 264–265; on bourgeois patriotism, 267; war, view of, 267–269; as candidate facing Millerand, 270–271; subsequent attitudes toward, 301–304; as seen by Soviets, 302; as seen by Cubans, 302–303; evaluation of contribution, 307–310
- Lafargue, Paul and Laura: financial help from Engels, 4, 29; 55, 56, 84; relations between, 4, 5, 8, 157–158; care of Longuet children, 29, 54–55, 160; move to Le Perreux, 55–56; Engels's funeral, attendance at, 155; and Engels's bequest, 155; travels, 282, 286, 288; suicide, 288–293; funeral, 297–298
- Lagardelle, Hubert, 196, 252, 286, 296
- Lavigne, Raymond, 77, 201, 217
- Legislative election of 1889, 79, 81, 82–83
- Lenin, 152, 231, 254, 277–279, 297, 299–300
- Leroy-Beaulieu, Paul, 27, 99, 189
- Liebknecht, Wilhelm, 69, 75, 76, 95, 112
- Lille, 18–19
- Longuet, Charles, 8, 29, 160
- Longuet, Edgar, 289, 290
- Longuet, Jean, 155, 157, 306, 307
- Longuet, Jenny, 7–8, 173
- Longuet, Robert-Jean, 157
- Marx, Eleanor, 29, 38, 57, 76–77, 132, 153–155, 158, 159–160
- Marx, Karl, 6–7, 9, 120, 125, 130, 131
- May Day, 77–78
- Mehring, Franz, 162, 296–297
- Michel, Louise, 50, 245
- Milhaud, Albert, 100
- Millerand, Alexandre, 48, 49; Lafargue, defense of, 91–93, 94, 95, 98, 102; and Saint-Mandé Program, 197; and socialist unification, 207; entry into government, 213; expulsion, 242; and 1906 election, 270, 271–272
- Millevoye, Lucien, 112–113
- Mink, Paule, 245–246
- Morgan, Lewis, 22, 35
- Le Mouvement socialiste*, 252
- Nord Department, 137
- Panama scandals, 113
- Pareto, Vilfredo, 189
- Parti Ouvrier Français (POF): Roubaix Congress (1884), 24–25; strengths and weaknesses of, 53–54; and 1888 municipal election, 63; Boulangism, neutrality toward, 65–66; Lille Congress (1890), 67, 83, 120, 121; and 1889 legislative election, 81–82; growth of, 83; Lafargue's candidacy, support of, 96–97; Lyons Congress (1891), 108; and municipal election of 1892, 108–109, 110; and legislative election of 1893, 111; and syndicalism, 118–119, 121–122; Marseilles Congress (1892), 118, 120, 122–123; agrarian program of, 126–127, 128, 134; Nantes Congress (1894), 129; Paris Congress (1893), 134; and patriotism, 134–138; and 1893 legislative

- election, 141–142; and literary criticism, 161–162; Romilly Congress (1895), 180–181; Lille Congress (1896), 180–181; Montluçon Congress (1898), 180–181; and 1896 municipal election, 197; and London Congress of Second International (1896), 198; opposition to reformism by militant minority, 199; and legislative election of 1898, 204–205; and Dreyfus affair, 206, 211; and ministerial participation, 214–217, 231–232; split in party, 220, 223, 224, 225, 229; formation of new antimilitarist party, 260; Roubaix Congress (1901), 234; and the “woman question,” 245–246; as minority in SFIO, 253; growing reformism of, 259; disseminating Marxism, role in, 304–305
- Parti Socialiste Français, 228, 230
- Pelloutier, Fernand, 116, 117
- Plekhanov, Georgi, 162
- Possibilists. *See* Broussists
- Pouget, Emile, 198
- Pressense, François de, 228–229
- Ranc, Arthur, 100
- Rappoport, Charles, 231, 298
- Renard, Georges, 200
- Renaudel, Pierre, 292
- Rerum Novarum*, 117
- Revolution of 1905, 263
- Roche, Ernest, 49, 90, 96
- Roubaix, 18
- Rouzade, Léonie, 245
- Saint-Pélagie prison, 11–12
- Second International. *See* International Workingmen’s Association
- Sembat, Marcel, 202
- Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), 69, 72–73, 130–131, 199–200, 242–243
- Le Socialiste*, 36, 37–38, 57, 60, 254, 264, 284
- Sorel, Georges, 169–170, 192–193, 195
- Sorelians, 303
- Susini, Paul de, 50
- Thorne, Will, 85, 141
- Trotsky, Leon, 297
- Vaillant, Edouard, 25, 26, 47, 76, 79, 85, 106, 207, 214, 253, 293, 306
- Valette, Aline, 203, 245
- Varenne, Alexandre, 273
- Vaughan, Ernest, 13, 65
- Vico, Giambattista, 16, 22, 27, 187
- Zévaès, Alexandre, 103, 117, 199, 255–256, 290, 295